NVMEN

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

ISSUED BY THE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

VOLUME XVI



LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1969

CONTENTS

JACOB NEUSNER, The Phenomenon of the Rabbi in Late Antiquity 1

H. S. HADDAD, "Georgic" Cults and Saints of the Levant . . 21

GÜNTER LANCZKOWSKI, Wahrheit und Skepsis im Aztekischen Denken 40

PETR POKORNÝ, Gnosis als Weltreligion und als Häresie . . 51

DONALD H. BISHOP, Religious Confrontation, a Case Study: The 1893 Parliament of Religions 63

International Association for the History of Religions; Study-Conference Jerusalem July 1968 77

Ph. H. J. HOUWINK TEN CATE, Hittite Royal Prayers . . . 81

JOSEPH SHIH, The Notions of God in the Ancient Chinese Religion 99

DAVID FLUSSER, Salvation Present and Future 139

L. J. VAN DER LOF, Manichäische Verbeugungen vor der Sonne auf dem Vorderplatze der Sankt Peterskirche in Rom? . . 156

JOHN. R. HINNELLS, Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery and its Influence on the New Testament 161

SVEIN BJERKE, The High God among the Zinza of Northwestern Tanzania 186

WOLFGANG WIEFEL, Fluch und Sakralrecht 211

E. M. PYE, The Transplantation of Religions 234

Publications Received 80, 240

NVMEN

Copyright 1969 by E. J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or translated in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm, microfiche or any other means without written permission from the publisher

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

THE PHENOMENON OF THE RABBI IN LATE ANTIQUITY*

BY

JACOB NEUSNER
Brown University

Jewish religious leadership through history has taken many forms. From biblical times onward the ancient tradition put forward one type of leader after another, from the patriarch to the prophet, from the anointed king, God-inspired general and judge, to the temple priest and guardian of both culture and cult. In the first century A.D., one kind of religious leader began at first to compete with, then to exclude from legitimacy and power, all others, and that was *the rabbi.* He maintained that all of the great leaders of Israel had been rabbis, in perfect anachronism even calling Moses "our rabbi" and crediting King David with having "studied the Torah" in the manner of the third century rabbi. It is no exaggeration to call the rabbi Israel's characteristic religious-leadership type, even though what a rabbi was and is has changed over the centuries. 1)

I

What unites all historical forms of the rabbinate is devotion to "study of the Torah," by which was meant both the written Scriptures as we have them and the Oral Revelation handed on by God to Moses at Sinai. It was invariably the claim of the rabbi that the whole Torah, both written and oral parts, was preserved, handed on, and embodied in the schools where rabbis were educated. The form of the oral tradition finally became the corpus of rabbinic literature, beginning with

---

*) Jacob Neusner is Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University. This paper is based upon his Morron Lecture at Hamilton College, April 2, 1968.

1) The egregious ascription of the title "rabbi" to biblical figures is matched by the retention of the title in subsequent, equally alien, settings, long after the Talmudic-rabbinic tradition had disintegrated. We have no history of the rabbi in America, for example. Abraham J. Karp is pursuing researches on that question, and promises a comprehensive account in time to come.

the Mishnah and Tosefta, extending then to the *beraitot,* or external traditions not included in either document but nonetheless held to be authoritative; encompassing further the *gemara,* the traditions and acute discussions on the Mishnah of the Babylonian and Palestinian schools; and including as well the various collections of exegetical saying on Scripture, under the name of *Midrash*; and, in later times, comprehending the legal codes, commentaries on the Talmud and on Talmudic commentaries, responsa, and other post-Talmudic, rabbinic creations. To the oral tradition one should add the philosophical and mystical traditions, both of which drew heavily upon rabbinical literature, partially shaped their concerns through it and confronted the issues set by it. "Heretics" were heretical because they diverged from, or even denied the validity of, rabbinical traditions. While not all Jews were masters of rabbinical learning, 'normative Jews' were Talmudic students. The Jewish school studied Scriptures as mediated by rabbinical lore. The Jewish student achieved distinction through his mastery of Talmud and its commentaries and codes. Jewish religious life was lived in the light of the learning of the rabbi. Jewish political and legal affairs were determined by rabbinic decision, based upon Talmudic and subsequent laws. Jewish theology derived from the biblical-Talmudic legacy. Judaism at it was known from the first to the end of the eighteenth century was rabinic Judaism.

In some ways, the rabbi is to be compared to the Mandarin. His stress upon perfect mastery of a specific body of literature, his view that the only valid qualification for leadership was such learning, his acceptance of the assessment of others older and wiser than himself of the quality or calibre of his knowledge—and therefore of his worth—these are highly Mandarin attributes. Further, the rabbi aspired to, and did, govern the Jewish community by the laws he learned in rabbinical schools, and held, as I said, that he was qualified to do so not because of any political, military, or economic power wielded by his class or estate, but because of his legal learning.

The perseverance of master-disciple relationships in rabbinic Judaism and Confucianism, the stress upon the disciple's reverence for every deed and word of the master, the preservation of stories of the master's doings as much as of his sayings, and the citation in the context of new situations in daily life of old sayings of the ancient teachers, beginning in the Jewish case with Moses, in the Confucian one with Confucius

himself—these are only the external accidents of an inner spiritual congruence. Likewise characteristic of both traditions was the raising of matters of etiquette into rituals, so that "good breeding" or "a man of honor," on the one side, and "the disciple of the sages" or the "master of Torah," on the other, was recognized not merely by what he knew, but also by the way in which he conducted himself, the way in which (in the Jewish case) he drank a cup of wine, walked in the street, or behaved with his master. For both Mandarin and rabbi, the objective of education was, in a measure, practical. Government is and should remain in the hands of the educated man, the Mandarin or rabbi. But the goal of education was not to create an efficient administrator. It was rather to create, in Confucian terms, the "complete man, possessing wisdom, free from covetousness, brave, accomplished, and well versed in courtesy, ceremonial, and music." This was the Mandarin ideal. For the master of Torah, the complete man represented other virtues. He was a living Torah. But the attainment of virtue through the way (halakhah), through learning, the central value of Pharisaism and Mandarinism—that was the same for both traditions. [2])

II

Our picture of Judaism in late antiquity comes down to us from the rabbinical schools in Palestine and Babylonia. While we have other sources of information, they are by and large neglected by philologically-obsessed Jewish scholars, or exploited by them only as to find illumination in the understanding of rabbinical literature. Archaeological data are consulted by some scholars, but mainly because archaeology may clarify the meaning of a word or the realities underlying an agricultural or civil law. So it is generally held—and this I think is a purely theological assertion—that "normative Judaism" was rabbinical Judaism. Whoever diverged from the rabbinical traditions, or who did not participate in them to begin with, is to be regarded as someone on the "fringe" or "heretical" or otherwise "not representative" of "Judaism." The history of the Jews in late antiquity is written, therefore, mostly in the theological terms set out by the rabbinical schools themselves. The example of Heinrich Graetz is most widely known. His

---

2) See H. G. Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way* (New York, 1960).

historiographical tendency, when dealing with the period in which the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds were taking shape, is simply to compose lives of the chief rabbinical figures and to intersperse in those lives some colorful comment or a few lines on the reigning Roman or Sasanian emperor. The rabbis could not have found for themselves a more loyal advocate. Yet Graetz was the most independent-minded of all those who wrote "Talmudic history." As Saul Lieberman pointed out, the historians who wrote of this period were not Talmudists, and the Talmudists were not historians. But that did not prevent the historians from writing history—in the forms set forth for them by the Talmudists first of all![3])

We know, however, of other forces shaping the history of the Jews in antiquity. What we do not known is the way they saw history or events, or the culture of their day. We know full well what the rabbis thought of themselves. But we do not know how others saw them. The rabbis' traditions represent the rabbis as that group in Babylonian Jewry which decided what was normative in all social and cultural affairs. The results of my inquiry[4]) into the effective influence and power of the rabbinate suggest, to the contrary, that the rabbis formed an important, but not dominant element. They constituted the sole well-organized creative force in cultural life, and they did try to control Babylonian Jewry. They succeeded in taking over the courts and in using them for their own purposes. But they did not wield the only effective power, whether political or cultural, within the Jewish community. The exilarchate, agency of the Iranian government to rule Jewry, held most political power, which it parcelled out to the rabbis for specific purposes. The masses of the people, inchoate and inert, could not easily be moved, and in some crucial ways certainly did not conform to the rabbis' demands. The schools were far from coextensive

---

3) See his "Martyrs of Caesarea," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939-1944), p. 394. And see my "Jews and Judaism under Iranian Rule: Bibliographical Reflections," *History of Religions.*

4) *A History of the Jews in Babylonia,* in particular *I. The Parthian Period* (Leiden, 1965), pp. 113-163; *II. The Early Sasanian Period* (Leiden, 1966), pp. 126-288; *III. From Shapur I to Shapur II* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 95-338; *IV. The Age of Shapur II* (Leiden, in press for 1969), pp. 125-402. For a brief summary, see my "Rabbis and Community in Third-Century Babylonia" in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity, Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 438-462.

with Babylonian Jewry, let alone with the Jewries of the other Sasanian satrapies. Because of the nature of our sources, however, the two themes upon which Babylonian Jewish history centers are, first, the relationship between the rabbis and the ordinary people, and, second, the configuration of the rabbi as a religious figure, of the schools as a cultural phenomenon, and of the rabbinical movement as an historical force.

Had later history worked out otherwise, we might have a wholly different picture of Babylonian Jewry. To take two hypothetical cases: If in post-Sasanian times, the exilarchate had vanquished the rabbinate in its struggle for the control of Babylonian Jewry, the exilarch and not the rabbis would have shaped the consequent legal and theological literature. That literature would surely not have consisted of a great commentary upon the Mishnah, but, one may guess, of a collection of legal rules and precedents as preserved in the exilarchic court archives, and stories about various exilarchs. In a word, it would have been not a Gemara but a Mishnah, the Mishnah of the legal head of Judaism in the Sasanian territories, or Babylonian satrapy at any rate (just as the preserved Palestinian Mishnah is that of the legal head of Judaism in the Roman territories). When the influence of Babylonian Jewry began to be felt in other parts of the world, for reasons largely irrelevant to the rightness or wrongness of anyone's theology or law, the exilarch would have loomed not only as the dominant figure in earlier times, but more important, as the single most significant source of right doctrine and law in the present age. It is possible that the great theme of Judaism might not have been "the Torah" and how to effect its law in everyday life, but rather, the Messiah, and how to extend his power through the rule of his earthly surrogate, the heir of David and holder of the sceptre of Judah (Gen. 49 : 10), for the exilarch claimed David as his ancestor. The exilarchic view of Jewish history might have preserved an account of a useful but dangerous group of heretics, possibly fanatics, known in olden times for their abilities to work wonders and for their loyalty to a law-code now forgotten, superseded, or ignored, the Palestinian Mishnah. In writing the story of "normative Judaism" of "Mar 'Uqba's age"—and no longer, "Talmudic times"—the historian would pay approximately as much attention to the rabbinate as he now pays to the exilarchate. He would stress the rabbinate's submission to the exilarch who decided

all important questions. The result would be an appendix and oblivion. It would carry us far afield to speculate on the consequent shape of Judaism, its theology, law, and history, which would have resulted from exilarchic revision and transmission of the sources.

If, to consider a second possibility, neither the exilarchate nor the rabbinate had flourished, if the Sasanians had refused to deal with *any* recognized Jewish authorities whatever, another kind of history might have emerged. It would be the history of a mass of Jews, living according to ancient customs and traditions, without particular impact upon Judaism in other times or other parts of the world. Like the Jews of Afghanistan, Bokhara, or Samarkand, Babylonian Jewry would have represented an ethnological curiosity. Its customs would have been interesting, along with its magic, astrological beliefs, sorcery, and laws. Its surviving ancient legends would have been written down by anthropologists, but neglected by historians. Such was the historiographical fate of Kurdish (Adiabenian) Jewry, which did survive to this century. Its customs constitute mere relics, not the basis of "the law" for all "good Jews". With neither politics, law, nor theology to attract the attention of later historians, lawyers, and theologians, Babylonian Jewry would similarly have survived, much like its ancestors of Achemenid, Seleucid, and Arsacid times, mostly as a blank page in history, sometimes as the object of rather hesitant speculation. In either case, the rabbis would have been no more clearly remembered than were the preliterary prophets of ancient Israel. Their deeds might have been recorded, but their doctrines would surely have been forgotten.

In fact, however, the rabbis won out. The literature which issued from their schools became normative for all of Judaism. It has therefore shaped our picture of their times. For this reason we have to stress what other kinds of sources might have tought us and how they might have shaped our picture of historical reality. This we must do especially because the schools provide a strangely impoverished view of history. Heirs of Scriptures which found in historical politics a partial revelation of divine judgment or intention, the rabbis might have derived chastisement, reasons for hope, and theological information in worldly happenings. Yet they paid remarkably little attention to contemporary

events. [5]) Shapur II is barely mentioned, and Julian's invasion of 363, which devastated Babylonia, not at all, in the literature of the fourth-century schools. The exilarch appears only when he said or did something of interest to the lawyers. The fate of the Jewish people was timeless, never specific or concrete. Even the academic politics involved in selecting the head of an academy was barely recorded, except in terms so veiled that only searching interpretation enables us to guess what may have taken place. Petty, day-to-day "events" such as the meeting of one master with another, an occurrence in the schoolhouse, a contretemps in the marketplace—these are reported, but only incidentally. Mishnaic and Biblical exegesis, legal and theological speculation based upon such exegesis, predominated in the literature to the near-exclusion of everything else. What we can say about the schools therefore concerns less what happened in or to them than the broad, static phenomena they seem to reveal. We can barely describe what took place in Abaye's school, who came or went, what was said on a given occasion and why. But we know a good deal about the opinions held in that school and in others and the roles they seem to have played in the larger society of Jewry.

III

One important body of opinions is preserved in the stories told about various rabbis, especially the wonders of learning and magic ascribed to them. These stories contain clear, incontrovertible, and factual testimony not as to what the rabbis did, but as to what disciples believed, and thought it important to say, about them. This is what matters when we are told that Rabbah was taken up to heaven because the heavenly academicians required his advice, or that the rabbis received letters from heaven informing them when to start and when to cease their mourning for Rabbah. I see no value in speculating about naturalistic explanations for such fabulous tales. Even if we could plausibly argue that the story-teller actually was talking about some earthly phenomenon or meant to convey a "rationalistic" idea in folkloristic terms, we should not as historians have gained much. The account is all we have as fact, and interpretation or philology cannot add very much to the

5) As I have already pointed out in "The Religious Uses of History," *History and Theory*, 5, 2 (1966), pp. 153-171.

historical information it contains. The historical question, second, is for us relatively unimportant. We are reasonably sure that the stories are false, and we cannot discover just how they originated. What is both important and reliable is the picture they give of the religious life of the schools. What is most striking about the schools is the conception that in them lived holy men, who more accurately than anyone else conformed to the image of God conveyed by divine revelation through the Torah of Moses "our rabbi." The schools were not holy places in the sense that pious people made pilgrimages to them, though they did, or that miracles were supposed to take place there, though many miracle-stories were told in a scholastic setting. The schools were holy because there men became saints. They became saints by learning the lessons and imitating the conduct of the masters. In doing so, they conformed to the heavenly paradigm, the Torah, believed to have been created by God "in his image," revealed at Sinai, and handed on from prophets to sages, to their own teachers. In the schools, sainthood was achieved through study of Torah and imitation of the master. What sainthood consisted of, how Torah was studied and what were its consequences—these are the issues of rabbinic Judaism.

Obedience to teachings of the rabbis led not merely to ethical or moral goodness, but to holiness or sainthood, as in the following saying:

> Abaye said, "Whoever carries out the teachings of the sages is called a saint (*qadosh*)."
>
> (b. Yev. 20a)

That disciples were called saints is also seen in the following:

> "Even though he loves the peoples, all his saints are in your hand, and they are cut at thy feet. He shall receive of your words" (Deut. 33 : 3)... R. Joseph learned, "These [saints] are the students of the Torah who cut their feet going from town to town and country to country to study Torah. 'He shall receive of your words' alludes to their give-and-take in [discussing] the words of the Omnipresent."
>
> (b. B.B. 8a)

So discussion of legal traditions, rather than an ascetic discipline or long periods of fasting and prayer, was the way to holiness. R. Joseph held that study of Torah was superior. If the masters and disciples obeyed the divine teaching of Moses "our rabbi," as they surely supposed they did, then their society, the school, would replicate on earth

the heavenly academy, just as the disciple would incarnate the heavenly model of Moses "our rabbi." We must take very seriously indeed the facts that the rabbis believed Moses was a rabbi, God donned phylacteries, and the heavenly court studied Torah precisely as did the earthly one. We may see these beliefs as projections of rabbinical values onto heaven, but the rabbis believed that they themselves were "projections" of heavenly "values" onto earth. That is not to suggest that the rabbis thought of themselves as consubstantial with the divinity. They carefully preserved the distinction between the master of Torah and the giver of the Torah.

But they did believe that those whose lives conformed to the image of God, the Torah, participated in God's holiness and also in his power, and this was attested by their ability to create men and resurrect the dead, to control angels and demons, and to perform other spectacular miracles.

IV

The study of Torah as a source of law in rabbinical schools followed highly rationalistic lines. Its method was based upon strict logic and made extensive use of practical reason. The rabbis, moreover, usually disapproved of magic. They lived, however, in a world in which supernatural beliefs and phenomena were everywhere taken seriously. They believed in God. They believed in prayer as an effective action, so words could affect the physical world. They believed in angels, astrology, demons, and heavenly revelations. These constituted the supernatural environment, and produced an expectation that miracles could and would be done through divine favor. Torah was held to be a source of supernatural power.

We must distinguish at the outset between the supernatural environment and specific, uncontingent acts of magic. Contingent rewards for merit attained through learning or piety were supernatural, but reliably effective magic is another matter. Usually, it is true, the rabbis performed miracles by prayer, and the miracle was believed to be not something they had done by their own power, but something God had done as a reward for their merit. Indeed, it was sometimes insisted that God might not do a miracle a second time, so should not be relied upon automatically to conform to their wishes. So too, though study of Torah was commonly believed to give a man supernatural powers,

rabbinic tradition was often insistent that these were not powers but merits, and that the efficacity of prayer by the meritorious was dependent on additional moral conditions.

However, these theoretical distinctions should not obscure two facts. First, there was a functional parallelism of the rabbi and the magician within their societies. Second, there was the further belief, accepted and perpetuated by the schools, that by mastering the Torah, a man could also master and thereby use directly its creative and miraculous powers. So a man could do miracles himself, not just ask for them to be done for him. And this mastery and use of Torah rendered Torah into a source of magical, not merely supernatural power. In the light of these beliefs, preserved within the schools themselves, it is not implausible to believe that many of the other obviously magical functions of the rabbis, which our texts represent as answers to prayer or acts of divine grace in response to human merit—or do not explain at all—were seen by many contemporaries, and probably by many of the rabbis themselves, as exercises of this supernatural power conferred by study of the Torah.

If we review the role of the rabbi in the supernatural world he believed in, we discover a remarkable set of facts. The rabbi was the authority on theology, that is, among other things, on the structure and order of the supernatural world. He knew the secret names of God and the secrets of the divine 'chariot'—the heavens—and of creation. If extraordinarily pious, he might even see the face of the Shekhinah; in any event, the Shekhinah was present in the rabbinical schools. The rabbi was therefore a holy man, freed from the evil impulse which dominated ordinary men, and consequently less liable to suffering, misfortunes, and sickness. He knew the proper times and forms of prayer and could pray effectively. Moreover, the efficacity of his prayers was heightened by his purity, holiness, and merits, which in turn derived from his knowledge of the secrets of Torah, and, consequently, his peculiar observances. Therefore not only his prayers in general, but also his prayers for particular purposes, were effective. He could bring rain or cause drought. His blessings brought fertility, and his curses, death. He was apt to be visited by angels and to receive communications from them. He could see demons and talk with them, and could also communicate with the dead. He was an authority on the interpretation of omens and of dreams, on means to avert

witchcraft, on incantations for cures, knot-tying [for phylacteries], and the manufacture and use of amulets. He was, in anthropological terms, a medicine man. Could a modern anthropologist spend a few years in ancient Pumbedita, Sura, or Nehardea, to study the social role of the rabbi, his resultant book would certainly be called something like "The Lawyer-Magicians of Babylonia."

Here, however, we must offer an important distinction. The fact that the rabbis performed the functions and claimed the powers characteristic, in primitive societies, of magicians might justify a modern anthropologist in applying to them that term, but it does not prove that they applied the term to themselves, or would have approved its application. In fact the rabbis would not have regarded their power as magical, or the Torah as a source of magic. The dividing line between true religion and magic was clearly drawn, widely recognized, and by virtue of that recognition, became a social reality. What was approved by society—in this case, the schools—required by custom, and unquestionably seen to be part of the established religion was usually thought to be in no way magical. However, Abaye said:

> "The sorcerer [who insists upon exact paraphernalia noting different properties of different kinds of magic] works through demons. He who does not, works by [pure] enchantment... The laws of sorcery are like those of the Sabbath. Certain actions are punished by stoning, some are not punished but forbidden, and others are entirely permitted. If one actually performs [magic], he is stoned. If he merely creates an illusion, he is exempt, but the act is prohibited." What is entirely permitted? Such as [the magic performed by] R. Ḥanina and R. ʿOshaʿaʾ, who spent every Sabbath eve studying the Laws of Creation, by means of which they made a third-grown calf and ate it.
>
> (b. Sanh. 67b)

One may only suppose that "magic" was permitted if the rabbis did it. Working through demons and enchantment may be to modern eyes no different from studying the "Laws of Creation" and applying them. But the distinction was important to Abaye.

Jewish society, including the rabbis', was not primitive. It had long since distinguished sharply, by its own standards, between what *it* considered magic, and what *it* considered religion—neither identical with what we should class under those terms—and by *its* standards, the rabbis were not magicians, as I just said. Some of them did practice magic on the side, but this is a different matter. The distinction has been best illustrated by Professor Morton Smith:

> In antiquity, the practice of magic was a criminal offense and the term 'magician' was a term of abuse. It still is, but the connotation has changed. It now primarily connotes fraud. Then the notion was that of social subversion. The efficacy of magic was almost universally believed, and the magician was conceived of as a man who, by acquiring supernatural powers, had become a potential danger to the established authority and to the order that they sought to maintain. Consequently magic was widely practiced but rarely admitted.
>
> For Judaism there was a further limiting factor in the dogma that there was no god save the Lord. This did not lead to a denial of the efficacy of pagan magic, nor did it prevent Jews from using the same magical practices as pagans. On the contrary, the Jews were famous as magicians, as Josephus says. The new discoveries by Professor M. Margolioth show that as late as the fourth and fifth centuries, Jews, steeped in the Old Testament and thoroughly at home in the Synagogue, were composing a magician's handbook which listed pagan deities and prescribed prayers and sacrifices to be offered to them in magical ceremonies. Among the prayers there is an invocation of Helios in transliterated Greek; and the conclusion comes upon reaching the Seventh Heaven with a celebration of Yahweh as the supreme God.
>
> At least the more scrupulous of the Jews distinguished their marvels as performed by the power of the supreme God from those of the pagans whose gods were demons and impure spirits. Rabbi 'Aqiva, complaining of his own ill success in magic, said, "When a man fasts in order that an unclean spirit should rest on him, the unclean spirit does so. It should happen, therefore, that when a man fasts in order that a pure spirit should rest on him, the pure spirit should do so. But what can I do since our iniquities are the cause of our difficulties? For it is said that your iniquities are dividing you from your God." The context leaves no doubt of the magical reference. But 'Aqiva is not, of course, represented in the Talmud as a magician, because that term was a term of abuse. The fact that a man was represented as a supernatural being is in itself a suspicious item, for this was a common claim of magicians and a regular result of magical operation.

Smith's reference to the handbook discovered by Margolioth, [M. Margolioth, *Sefer HaRazim, Hu Sefer Keshafim Mitequfat HaTalmud* (Jerusalem, 1967)], points to the necessity of further distinction, for the two are certainly not in the same class, yet both of them reflect attitudes different from the one common in stories of rabbis whose merits enabled them to pray with good hope that their prayers would be answered.

At the pagan end of the scale, we may suppose, was the Jew who simply learned and practiced pagan magic as such, throwing in, perhaps, for good measure a few extra conjurations by the sacred name, Yahweh, or some prayers for him or to the Jewish angels. Of such men we have plentiful evidence in the magical papyri. Next to them come men like the author of *Sefer HaRazim* who took over pagan

magic, but made it part of a picture of the cosmos in which Yahweh was the supreme God, to whom all the pagan deities were subordinate. Then there was the position familiar as that of "normative Judaism": the rabbi does not practice "magic" at all, but his "acts of piety and religious observances" so increase his "merits" that he can pray, bless or curse, with the hope that his prayers would be answered and his blessings and curses be made effective by divine or angelic action. Finally there were those who, by study of the Torah, sought to master it so as to be able to use directly, for their own purposes, its creative and miraculous powers; in ʿAqiva's words (which, however, reflect slightly different notions), they "fasted that a pure spirit should rest upon them." Such men could do miracles for and by themselves, not just ask to have them done for them. And this mastery and use of the Torah made Torah a source of magical, not merely supernatural, power. These beliefs were preserved within the schools themselves, but were consistently overshadowed, especially in exoteric presentation, by stories and teaching presenting the "normative theory." It follows that the rabbis never called themselves magicians. On the contrary, they consistently and explicitly disapproved of "magic," as I have just shown in Abaye's case. But many of the things they did, especially the supernatural character alleged to have been imparted to them by their knowledge of Torah, must be seen in the context of antiquity as appropriate to divine-men or magicians. Unique to the rabbis is the claim that their miracles, supernatural graces, and magical actions derived from the Torah, rather than from some other source of supernatural power. To them this was sufficient justification.

V

The reader woud err if he saw the rabbi as fundamentally a magician. In his own eyes, the rabbi was chiefly a lawyer and a student of Torah. The most important part of Torah in his view was the legal material. Yet we have striking evidence that ordinary folk saw the rabbi as a "lawyer-magician" as I said. This evidence derives from the seventh-century A.D. magical bowls found at Nippur, a town in Babylonia not far from Sura, where a major rabbinical academy was located. The bowls were published by J. A. Montgomery [*Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia, 1913)]. In them, a well-known Tal-

mudic rabbi, Joshua b. Peraḥiah, who dates from the second century B.C., figures. He appears in bowls nos. 8, 9, 17, 32 (= 33) as follows:

> No. 8: [That there flee from the house of this Geyônài bar Mâmâi the evil Lilith ... And again, you shall not appear to them in his house nor in their dwelling ... because it is announced to you, whose father is named Palḥas and whose mother Pelaḥdad—because it is announced to you] that Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥiah has sent against you the ban ... Thou Lilith, male Lilis and female Lilith, Hag and Ghul, be in the ban ... [of Rabbi] Joshua b. Peraḥia, and thus has spoken to us Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥia. A divorce writ has come to you from across the sea, and there is found written in it [against you] whose father is named Palhas and whose mother Pellaḥdad ... they hear from the firmament ... Hear and obey and go from the house ... And again, you shall not appear to them either in dream by night nor in slumber by day, because you are sealed with the signet of El Shaddai and with the signet of the house of Joshua b. Perahia and by the Seven which are before him ...

There follow adjurations by the Strong one of Abraham, etc. On the divorce issued to Lillith from her victim, Montgomery comments, "This was a happy thought of the magicians, who thus applied the powers of binding and loosing claimed by the rabbis to the disgusting unions of demons and mortals ... The magical writ affects the same forms and formalism as that of the divorce court ... The names of both parties are exactly given, hence the parents of the liliths are here specifically named." In addition, the terms of the divorce are given properly, and properly served on the divorcée. Divine authority is invoked—the writ has come down from heaven, and so, like writs from abroad, special forms are included. The commissioners and witnesses are angels; the rabbi seals the divine decree. Further references to R. Joshua are as follows:

> No. 9: The bowl I deposit and sink down, and the work I operate, and it is in [the fashion of] Rabbi Joshua bar Perahia. I write for them divorces, for all the Liliths who appear to them ...
>
> No. 17: This day above any day, years, and generations of the world, I Kômêš bath Maḥlaphta have divorced, separated, dismissed thee, thou Lilith, Lilith of the Desert, Hag and Ghul ... I adjure you by the honor of your father and by the honor of your mother, and take your divorces and separations, thy divorce and thy separation, in the ban which is sent against you by Joshua b. Peraḥia, for so has spoken to thee Joshua b. P.: A divorce has come to thee from across the sea. There is found, 'You whose mother is Palhas and whose father Pelaḥdad, you Liliths: And now flee and go forth and do not trouble Kômêš b.M., in her house and her dwelling. I bind and I seal with the seal of El Shaddai and with the seal of Joshua b. Perahia the healer ...

> No. 32: ... The bowl I deposit and sink down, a work which has been made like that of Rav Jesu bar Perahia who sat and wrote against them—a ban-writ against all the Demons and Devils and Satans and Liliths ... Again he wrote against them a ban-writ which is for all time ...

To the Jews of sixth and seventh century A. D. Nippur, therefore, the figure of R. Joshua b. Perahiah was associated with two anti-demonic prophylaxes, first, the ability to issue of legal bill of divorce against female demons, second, the pronouncement of a ban against demons. The divorce and the ban seem confused; in no. 8, the ban is announced, and then the proper formula for a divorce delivered from abroad is introduced, together with the necessary witnesses, signatures, and sealing, the last-named with the signet of God and Joshua's house. In nos. 9, 17, and 32, the divorce is more clearly explicated, in perfectly proper legal language.

What other traditions about R. Joshua b. Perahiah existed in Palestinian and Babylonian rabbinical schools? First of all, no passage suggests R. Joshua b. Perahiah composed bills of divorce against demons. The extant traditions should be divided according to time and place. In the Tannaitic Midrashim, we find no reference whatever to R. Joshua. In the Mishnah, R. Joshua is cited twice, in Hagigah 2:2, on the ordination controversy, and in Avot 1 : 6, which contains his saying in the chain of tradition, that one should provide himself with a teacher and a fellow-disciple, and judge people favorably. Nothing in the Mishnah of R. Judah the Prince suggests that R. Joshua was a magician. The Tosefta reveals as saying on purity laws (Makhshirin 3 : 4). The references in the two Talmuds deal with only two matters. First, in B. Menahot 109b, we find a *beraita*, citing R. Joshua b. Perahiah that it is just as hard to accept high office as it is to leave it.

The other matter, however, is more important. It occurs in b. Sanhedrin 109b, with a parallel in b. Sotah 47a. (The incident is further echoed in yer. Hagigah 2 : 2 and Sanhedrin 6 : 9, but there the rabbi in question is Judah b. Tabbai.) The *locus classicus* is fully discussed by Herford. It is attached to a *beraita* that one should not too harshly repel potential converts to Judaism. R. Joshua b. Perahiah's treatment of Jesus is cited. When Yannai the King killed the rabbis, Joshua and his disciple Jesus fled to Alexandria. Simeon b. Shetah called them back when times proved more favorable. On route home, they found a certain inn where R. Joshua praised the hostess. Jesus disagreed, saying

she had narrow eyes. Joshua then excommunicated him for looking too closely at the woman, saying, "Wretch, do you thus busy yourself?!" Jesus tried without success to repent. Finally, being repulsed, Jesus went and hung up a tile and worshipped it. At that time, Joshua called on him to repent, without result. "So a teacher has said, 'Jesus the Nazarene practised magic and led astray and deceived Israel.'" Herford suggests that the story is based upon a Palestinian tradition. In any case, we may be sure that the legend of Joshua as a visitor to Egypt was known in the schools of both countries.

On the relationship between Joshua b. Perahiah in the magical bowls and the Talmudic passage, Montgomery comments (pp. 227-78):

> We find then in these magical bowls an independent tradition concerning an early hero of the Law, who appears as endowed with magic powers, and who furthermore was able to make the ascent of the soul to heaven. He was accordingly one of the earliest to attain that spiritual privilege... Joshua was possibly one of the good company of apocalyptists and our magic tradition may preserve a true reminiscence of his personality and claims.

To this I may add another viewpoint. We must, first of all, regard the Joshua of the bowls as an authentic portrait of what some people, probably Jews, thought about the rabbi. In a word, they regarded him as both a lawyer and a magician. As a lawyer, he was expected both to know the precise formula for a bill of divorce and to be able to issue a ban. So we noted in no. 9, Joshua b. Perahiah's divorces for all the Liliths who appear to them; in no. 17, both the ban spoken by Joshua, and the divorce spoken (read) to Lilith by Joshua, in the appropriate legal language; no. 32, a ban-writ against the demons. Now what we should not find surprising is that rabbis, whose effective legal jurisdiction extended mostly to matters of exchanges of property and personal status, should be consulted on drawing up bills of divorce. What is surprising is that those legal documents were presumed effective, as in the Mandaean magical bowls, against demons. Here the religious role of the rabbi becomes important, namely, his capacity, because of mastery of Torah, to exercise the powers inherent in the Torah. He could therefore perform works of magic against demons (among other miracles). We shall see below that Abaye (among others) was believed to be able to overcome demons because "in heaven his Torah was highly regarded." Knowledge of Torah produced the capacity to do supernatural actions. In the magical bowls, the two predominant roles of the

rabbi are united in the figure of Joshua b. Perahiah; the law is effective—against demons, and the rabbi carries out the law—for supernatural purposes. We found, however, little direct evidence that in the rabbinical schools of either Babylonia or Palestine such supernatural powers were attributed to R. Joshua. One can hardly argue that everyone who went to Alexandria came home a magician, despite the general reputation of the place. If, as I tentatively suppose, the conception of divorcing a Lilith may have begun outside of the Jewish community, then it is further to be noted that once it was Judaized, people assumed a rabbi would carry out the necessary formalities. But even if the conception was originally Jewish, the same assumption was no less natural.

What I find difficult to account for is the attribution of so central a magical role to R. Joshua b. Perahiah, who, as we have seen, played a relatively minor, and generally not-supernatural, role in rabbinic traditions of both Palestine and Babylonia. I may, with much hesitation, conjecture on why those who made the bowls selected R. Joshua above all other rabbis. Perhaps, as Montgomery suggests, his relationship to Jesus, believed by many Jews to be an expert magician and by the rabbis to be R. Joshua's disciple, was sufficient to distinguish R. Joshua. If the disciple was so puissant, how much more should the Jews, disciples ever more of the rabbis and more and more under their effective control by the seventh century, turn to his rabbinical master?

VI

How shall we account for these data? The rabbis' theological viewpoint is clearly stated in the following:

> Rava said, "If the righteous desire it, they can be creators, for its is written, 'But your iniquities have distinguished between you and your God...' (Is. 59 : 2)." [That is to say, but for sin, man's power would equal that of God, and men could create a world.] Rabbah created a man [GBR'], and sent him to R. Zera. R. Zera spoke to him, but he did not answer. He said to him, "You are a creature of the magicians [HBRY' = Magi]. Return to your dust."
>
> (b. Sanh. 65b)

So learning and piety render man into the likeness of God and therefore endow him with God's powers of creation. God had made the world through Torah, and masters of Torah could similarly do wonderful acts of creation. Rava said that only sin prevented man from per-

forming divine miracles, like both Rabbah, who was able to make a man, and R. Zera, who was able to destroy him.

The following story contains another attribution of extraordinary power:

> Rabbah and R. Zera feasted together on Purim. They became drunk and Rabbah arose and cut R. Zera's [throat]. The next day he prayed on his behalf and resurrected him. Next year, he asked, "Will your honor come and feast with me?" He replied, "A miracle does not always happen."
>
> (b. Meg. 7b)

So the rabbi, like God, could resurrect the dead. Similarly, the rabbi's knowledge of Torah was sufficient to drive away demons:

> [ʾIgrat daughter of Maḥalat, queen of demons] once met Abaye. She said to him, "Had they not proclaimed concerning you in heaven, 'Take heed of Naḥmani and his Torah', I should have endangered you." He replied, "If I am important in heaven, I order you never to pass through inhabited areas."
>
> (b. Pes. 112b)

We do not know the result. The same discussion continues, "But we see that she *does* pass through [inhabited regions]?" The reply was that demons frequent narrow paths and their horses bolt from there and thus bring them into settled places. What is important is that people believed or were expected to believe that because of Abaye's merits, specifically his learning, he and other people were protected from demons, as from other dangers.

A rabbi's prayer was also believed potent against demons:

> ... A certain demon haunted Abaye's schoolhouse, so that when two [disciples] entered even by day they were harmed. [Abaye ordered that R. Aḥa b. Jacob spend the night in the school.] The demon appeared to him in the guise of a seven-headed dragon. Every time [R. Aḥa] fell on his knees, one head fell off. The next day he reproached [the schoolmen], "Had not a miracle occurred, you would have endangered my life."
>
> (b. Qid. 29b)

Abaye had believed that R. Aḥa's merits would be sufficient to exorcize the demon, and the reply, like R. Zera's to Rabbah when the latter cut the former's throat and resurrected him, was that in any case one should not rely upon miracles.

So the rabbi was able to persuade God to resurrect the dead. That does not mean he was "like God". Had Rabbah been able to do it like

God, R. Zera would have had no reason to refuse a second invitation, unless he did not want to repeat the experience. The refusal as given indicates that the miracle was not strictly by magic but by prayer and rather uncertain reward for merits. God does miracles without praying to anybody, and the rabbi generally relies upon prayer or merits. That is the difference between an ordinary story of prayer and its reward, anl those in which the rabbis' own extraordinary powers, probably acquired by prayer study or other merits, *now are usable directly and uncontingently.*

Furthermore, if Torah yielded magic, magic could also be used to produce greater Torah. Abaye believed that a certain bird, properly eaten, would help one increase in wisdom. One eats half the right side and half the left, and places the remainder in a brass tube, to be sealed with sixty sealings. This is to be suspended on his arm. One then studies to his heart's content, and finally consumes the other half. That seals in the new learning. If he fails to do so, he will forget what he has learned.

This view of the worldly benefits of studying the Torah, keeping the commandments, and acting virtuously was hardly the invention of the rabbis. From biblical times, it was believed that if the Jews faithfully kept the covenant and did the commandments, they would enjoy rain and other forms of prosperity. Such was the theory of Deuteronomy. The rabbis simply arrogated to themselves and their activities promises earlier believed to depend upon the good works of priests, prophets, and other holy men, and upon popular adherence to their teachings.

VII

What may be said from the perspective of the historian of religion? In think we have here an example of the effort to achieve the 'replication of heaven.' To explain: The rabbis conceived, first, that on earth they studied Torah just as in heaven, God, the angels, and Moses "our rabbi" did. The heavenly schoolmen were even aware of Babylonian scholastic discussions, requiring Rabbah's information about an aspect of purity-taboos, acknowledging Abaye's Torah as a prophylactic against demons.

This conception, second, must be interpreted by reference to the belief that the man truly in the divine image was the rabbi, who em-

bodied revelation, both oral and written, and all of whose actions constituted paradigms of not merely correct, but heavenly norms. Rabbis could create and destroy men because they were righteous, free of sin, or otherwise holy, and so enjoyed exceptional grace from heaven.

Third, it follows that Torah was held to be a source of supernatural power. The rabbis controlled the power of Torah because of their mastery of Torah quite independent of heavenly action. They could issue blessings and curses, create men and animals. They were masters of witchcraft, incantations, and amulets. They could communicate with heaven. Their Torah was sufficiently effective to thwart the action of demons. However they disapproved of magic, they were expected to do the things magicians do.

A fourth central conception was that all Jews were expected to become rabbis. This belief set rabbinic Judaism apart from Manichaeism, Mazdaism, Oriental Christianity and other contemporary cults, for no one expected that everyone would assume the obligations or attain to the supernatural skills of Manichaean Elect, Mazdean Magi, Christian nuns and monks, or the religious virtuosi and cultic specialists of other groups. The rabbis, by contrast, wanted to transform the entire Jewish community into an academy where the whole Torah was studied and kept.

These four beliefs enable us to understand the rabbis' view that Israel would be redeemed through Torah. Because Israel had sinned, she was punished by being given over into the hands of earthly empires. When she atones, she will be removed from their power. The means of atonement or reconciliation were study of Torah, practice of commandments, and doing good deeds. These would transform each Jew into a rabbi, hence a saint. When all the Jews had become rabbis, they then would no longer lie within the power of history. The Messiah would come. So redemption depended upon the "rabbinization" of all Israel, that is to say, upon the attainment by all Jewry of a full and complete embodiment of revelation or Torah. The reason was that precisely when Jewry did so, it would achieve a perfect replication of heaven. When Israel on earth became, or attained to, such a replica of heaven, as a righteous, holy, saintly community, it would, like some rabbis even now, be able to exercise the supernatural power of Torah. With access to the consequent theurgical capacities, redemption would naturally follow.

"GEORGIC" CULTS AND SAINTS OF THE LEVANT

BY

H. S. HADDAD

Chicago, U.S.A.

Observing the religious scene in the Levant, one is struck by the great variety of sectarian affiliations. The religious spectrum, more than in any other place in the Western World, covers all three Near Eastern religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with the greatest assortment of sects, schools, and secret rites.

However, underlying all this diversity, one observes a common undercurrent of religiosity among the rural population of the area. The peasants of all religions and denominations flock to the same shrines to show their devotion and to present their offerings. Many holy places on the Syrian coast are shared by Christians and Muslims. Orthodox and Catholics, Sunna and Shi^{c}a, Nusairis and Druzes, all share in popular beliefs and myths concerning the forces of nature, taboos, acts of worship, and *nidr* ("sacrifice").

The study of the interplay between the popular and the "higher" religions helps to shed light on the history of religious movements in this area. A study that will cover all the available data on the subject is beyond the scope of this study. This short article deals only with a single theme as a sample of a popular cult that survived from "pagan" times and that cut through formal religious affiliations. This theme is that of the fertility deity who, as we shall demonstrate, survived till the present time as St. George. In the Levant St. George is identified with Khidr of the Muslims. Khidr, in turn is identified with St. Elias, the Elijah of the Bible.

We shall attempt to show that, in spite of the existence of a viariety of religions and sects, a common theme binds together the cults of these three saints in what one might call a rural religious system. We propose to give this religious system of the peasants the name "georgic." This is to recognize that the cult of St. George symbolizes this agrarian

religious attitude, and that the term "georgic" indicates the socio-economic class in which we are interested here much better than the term "peasant" with its pejorative connotations, or the term "rural" which may be too limited to its geographic significance. The term "georgic" emphasizes the ecological aspect of the group. It comprises all those who are preoccupied with food production and the provision of living by coming into direct contact with nature.

This short study will attempt to show how a seemingly popular deity of fertility penetrated into Judaism, Christianity, Islam and their offshoots. The degree, the condition, and the consequence of the acceptance of such popular cults into the formal structure of these religions may shed some light on the basic differences among them. There is, in our opinion, adequate evidence to show that George, Khidr, and Elijah share in a common identity and that the cults of these "georgic" saints is a continuation, with variations, of the cults of the Baals of ancient Syria.

We have limited our study to the Near East, more precisely to the Levantine coast of Syria from Anatolia to Sinai, although one can easily see that some of these cultic practices can apply to a much wider area. This is true especially of Eastern Europe which falls principally within the same culturel complex as the Near East.

The Georgic Saints

St. George

Unlike other Christian saints who are men promoted to a higher level, in some cases to displace old pagan deities, St. George seems to be a deity who was "demoted" to the rank of saint. His cult and his fame spread all through Europe as attested by the popularity of the personal name and by the many churches, monasteries, and shrines dedicated to him. In the 12th century the Crusaders made him quite popular as a symbol of knighthood and valor. Brought to Britain, St. George, in due time, became the patron saint of the realm. He is also the patron saint of various European cities. In addition, his cult is very popular among the peasants of the Balkans and Russia and, in fact, wherever the main occupation of the population is agriculture and animal husbandry.

Yet, unlike most other Christian saints who were historical personages, missionaries, and martyrs of the faith, George does not seem

to have a historical foundation. Consequently, his status as a saint was challenged. Attempts to link him with historically known persons were not too successful. Gibbon, for example, in his hostility to saints in general, links him with George of Cappadocia of whom the author did not think highly. [1]) Generally accepted tradition asserts that St. George was a true champion of the Christian faith. He lived in Lydda in Palestine and saved the King's daughter, a Christian convert, from the dragon. *Butler's Lives of the Saints* defends St. George against the accusations that he was a form of a pagan divinity, asserting that he was a Christian knight who lived in Palestine in the 3rd. century. [2])

In spite of the popularity of St. George, the official Church circles had difficulty placing him in the rank of the saints. Many of his attributes, the rites connected with his feast-day, and the myths about him could not easily be redefined in strict Christian terms. As early as the 5th century, pope Gelasius condemned the acts of St. George as corrupted by heretics, but asserted that the saint himself was a real martyr and, as such, worthy of reverence. Three centuries later, this condemnation was repeated in the East by the patriarch Nicephorus. [3]) The "acts" condemned were, undoubtedly "georgic" folklore surviving from pre-Christian times. Calvin, in his attack on the cult of the saints in general, singled out St. George in particular as a ghost or phantom. [4]) In 1965 the Vatican announced the abolishing of St. George's day as a feast day, reducing it to commemoration.

The enigma of St. George was a controversy treated by many scholars. He was linked to and equated with many divine and human personages in the Syro-Babylonian, Greek, and Christian mythologies. He was, among others, equated with Perseus because of his fighting the dragon, with Glaucos, the green fertility genius, because of the implication of the name, with Horus, Travagant, and Tammuz-Adonis. [5])

---

1) E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Chicago 1952), vol. I, p. 322, 358.

2) *Butler's Lives of the Saints* (1956), vol. II, p. 150.

3) Cf. Smith, *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (1880), vol. I, p. 646.

4) Calvin, *Institutes*, iii, 20, 27.

5) Legends about St. George exist in profusion, not only in Greek and Latin sources, but also in Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, etc., differing often very widely. On these texts see K. Krumbacher, „Der Heilige Georg" in *Abhandlungen der König. bayerischen Akad.* XXV, n. 3; for accounts on St. George, his cult

The name "George" ties the cult of the saint closely to the earth and to nature. Its meaning "husbandman, farmer" leaves no doubt about the agrarian origin of the cult. Perhaps the best translation of the name would be the Arabic term "*fallāh.*" As a proper personal name it was not in use before the Christian era. This fact indicates clearly that the name George was used only after it became honored, that is to say it was used as the name of a saint and after the general acceptance of the cult. As personal name "George" is not found in pre-Christian Hellenistic records. It is safe to assume that, in the urbanized Hellenistic society, the word "georgeus" referred to a lower class of people, just as the word "fallāh" still carries pejorative connotations in the urban centers of the Near East.

How then can the word "georgeus" or "georgos" which denotes an occupation at a low socio-economic level come to be applied to one of the most popular saints of Christianity? The only explanation that comes to mind is that it started as an appelation of the "divinity of the peasants" or the "peasant divinity." One can surmise that, in urban centers such as Antioch, it was applied to the Baal or Zeus worshipped in the shrines of the countryside by the peasantry, possibly called *Zeus Georgeus* or *Belus Georgeus.* This assumption is supported by archeological evidence: an inscription from Athens contains an invocation of *Zeus Georgos* "Zeus the Farmer" in connection with the sacrifice of the 20th of the month of Maimekterion. [6]) This Baal or Zeus of the country folks is almost certain to be the origin of St. George. The attributes of the Christian saint, as we shall demonstrate, link him

---

and his identity with other mythological figures: H. Delahaye, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires* (1909), 45-76; E. A. Wallis Budge, *St. George of Lydda* (1930) with Ethiopian texts; G. F. Hill, *St. George the Martyr* (1915); G. J. Marcus, *Saint George of England* (1929); Clermont Ganneau, „Horus et St. Georges" in *Revue Archéologique,* n.s. XXXII (1876) pp. 196-204, 372-99; C. S. Hulst, *St. George of Cappadocia in Legend and History* (1909), with a list of monuments of St. George. Other works, stressing St. George in art. Scharf, "On a Votive Painting of St. George and the Dragon" in *Archaeologia* XLIX (1885), pp. 243-300; Gordon, *St. George, Champion of Christendom* (1907); Bulley, *St. George for Merrie England* (1908), etc. On St. George in Syrian folklore: René Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nosairis* (1900) and other works listed here.

6) Art. "Georgos" in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1953).

strongly even to the ancient Baal-Hadad known to us from the Ugaritic texts of the 14th century B.C.

Khidr.

The old baalic tradition that still lives in St. George is likewise found in Khidr, the green *walī*. [7]) Muslim scholars, confronted with the popularity of Khidr among the masses, also attempted to find a historical underpinning for the saint. Almost all commentators on the Qur'an agree that the *fata* (young man) in the story of Moses at the "Junction of the Two Seas" (*Majmaᶜ al-baḥrain*, Sura 18: 59-63) was Khidr. [8]) Many, of course, accepted Khidr without questioning, but tried to connect him to historical figures and historical events. In addition to linking him with Moses, another tale makes of him a companion, or brother, of Elias. Both Khidr and Elias are said to have led Alexander to the fountain of eternal life through the Land of Darkness. Here Elias-Elijah takes the places of Andreas. [9])

Arabic sources from the Middle Ages range over a wide variety of explanations of the great *walī*. Thaᶜlābī, in his history of the prophets *(qiṣaṣ al-'anbiyā')*, asserts that Khidr comes from Persia and Elias from Israel, that they meet each year in the season, that they both are living still and will live so long as the Qur'an existed in the world; when the Qur'an is removed, they shall die. [10])

The Sufis of Islam laid particular claim to intimate companionship with Khidr as the one to guide, inspire, and instruct them. It is interesting to note that the Kabbalists in Judaism, the counterparts of the Sufis, talk in similar terms about Elijah.

The Nusairis, or Alawites, a secret sect in the mountains of North Syria, revere Khidr more than any other *walī*. His name to them may

---

7) The name of Khidr is most probably connected to the Arabic word for "green" *akhḍar*. Some scholars prefer the form *Khadir* (after Lidzbarski, in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Verwandte Gebiete,* VII, 1892, pp. 104-116). We prefer, however, to use the popular form of the name. Other theories about the name of Khidr include one by St. Guyard, in *Revue de l'histoire de Religion* I, pp. 344-45, which makes it a contraction of the name *Khasisadra* in the legend of Gilgamesh.

8) For more detail see J. Friedlaender, *Die Chadirlegende und der Alexanderroman* (1913), pp. 61-107. On the same subject: Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts,* pp. 78 ff.; also art. "Khadir" *in Encyclopedia of Islam.*

9) C. Virolleaud, "Khadir et Travagant" in *Revue Asiatique* (1953), p. 163.

10) Al-Tha'labi, *Qiṣaṣ al-'anbiyā'* (Cairo, 1314 A.H.), p. 16.

be the divine name *par excellence*. It is invoked before almost any undertaking or action. *Yā Khidr* to the Nusairis is equivalent in importance and is as frequently used as *yā Allāh* of the Muslim Àrabs. Oaths in the name of Khidr are most binding, more so than any other form of oath. Under the influence of the Ismaʿīlī propagandists and in deference to their Ismaʿīlī rulers in the Middle Ages the Nusairis probably substituted Ali for Khidr as the name of the divinity. This is true certainly of the few sacred writings of the Nusairis that have come to light. [11]) Khidr may in fact stand for Jesus, Muhammad, and all the prophets; the name may be applied to all at the same time. [12]) It is also suspected that the Nusairis believe that Khidr is the name of the divine, and all the prophets are emanations of this divine name. [13])

Khidr is identified, on one hand, with St. George. This is attested by the common popular belief all over the Levant. Christian shrines of St. George are commonly called after Khidr by the non-Christian population. On the other hand, Khidr is St. Elias also by common popular belief and by the fact that shrines of St. Elias are also called after Khidr. Jews of Palestine with the name Elijah used to arabize their name as Khidr. This identification is explicit in the Turkish name of Khidr, which is *Khizrilias* (Khidr-Elias). As early as the 16th century, Busbecq spoke of a Turkish hero, Chederles, to whom were ascribed exploits similar to those of St. George. [14]) S. Lyde noted, in 1860, that the Nusairis of North Syria revere greatly "the Khudr, who, with the Christians, is Mar Elias or St. George." [15])

Elijah-Elias

The Christian Mar Elias is an extension of the Biblical Elijah who is called a prophet. However, he is quite different from the other prophets of ancient Israel. His career is shrouded with mystery and

---

11) Cf. Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nosairis*, p. 135.

12) *Ibid.*

13) The religion of the Nusairis is, in all probability, a form of ancient, pre Christian "paganism," displaying the ancient cults of georgic Syria of the first millennium B.C. It took Islamic, particularly Shi'a, appearances and terminology to protect itself from persecution under Islamic law. The secrecy of initiation and other ritualistic practices may hide ancient customs.

14) Quoted in Smith, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, II, 647.

15) S. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery* (London 1860), p. 174.

full of legendary deeds. His attributes, which will be enumerated later, put him firmly in the company of the "georgic saints."

The Bible's account of Elijah probably comes from an independent cycle of stories and legends derived from sources in the North and incorporated into the books of Kings during the Babylonian exile. [16]) The legend of Elijah was greatly augmented in the Talmudic and popular Jewish traditions. According to these legends, Elijah is omnipresent, attending all ceremonies of circumcision. It is customary to keep a vacant seat, the "chair of Elijah" ready for him. On Passover eve, a special cup of wine is set aside for him.

Significantly, Elijah is the only Old Testament personality that became a popular Christian saint. As a personal name, Elias is as popular as George among the Christians of the Levant. Although similar in attributes, George and Elias are two distinct persons in the popular lore, as well as in the official Church records of the saints. However, the fact that Khidr is identified as either one or as both at the same time, makes the hypothesis of a common origin of all three saints very plausible. This common origin is to be sought in the ancient "baalic" cults of the agricultural society of the Near East. Most of the differences among these saints, as we shall attempt to show, are no more than variations on a theme. However, some of these variations reflect the influence of the institutional religions and, in some cases, the ecological differences in the population of the area.

The attributes of the "georgic" saints can be grouped into three main categories:

1. *Fertility*: The saints symbolize, or control, the sacralized forces of nature, places, objects, etc. that are related to the fertility in crops, animals, and humans.

2. *Power*: The extension of the saints' control over the forces of nature from the realm of fertility to that of overwhelming power exemplified in the storm, the flood, the mountain, and the sea. This power includes destruction, the ultimate control of fate. As such, these saints become symbols of military power and patron saints of armies.

3. *Life and Death*: The georgic saints symbolize continuity by claiming eternal life (Elijah, Khidr) or through a cycle of life and

---

16) See N. H. Smith, in *Interpreters Bible*, vol. 3, pp. 3 f; 12 f. Also the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1966), art. "Elia."

death, *i.e.*, the continuous renewal of life as observed in the vegetation. It is in this category that we find the greatest differences among these three saints.

We shall move now to a closer examination of the georgic cults within these categories.

Fertility

Fertility is probably the central theme of the cult of the georgic saints. Peasant culture, anywhere, is unthinkable without fertility rites. St. George's fertilistic powers hardly need description. He is recognized all over the lands of the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe as guardian of the fertilizing powers in nature. In Russian, Roumanian, Slavonic, and other folklore, Green George is patron saint of sheep, cattle, horses, vegetation and rain. He unlocks the moist earth with his golden keys. In addition, he has the power of blessing barren women with offspring.[17]) In the Levant, shrines of St. George-Khidr and St. Elias-Khidr are visited by barren women, even today; they vow money, cattle, or their children to the saint in case their prayers were answered.[18])

St. George's day, April 23, heralds the beginning of summer all over the Near East. Peasants consider their fruit trees safe from frost after that date. Tradition has it that snakes do not appear until the coming of St. George's day. Horses and cattle are sent out to pasture about the same time. The feast day of Khizrilias, also April 23, was considered an official day for summertime activities by government circles of the Ottoman Empire. On that date some civil or military operations were carried out. The squadron that sailed to cruise the Aegean sea started on that day; so was the departure of the horses of the imperial stables to the grazing grounds.[19])

The date of April 23d is important as a link between the cult of St. George and ancient Hellenistic cults of Baal-Zeus. Malalas mentions that Seleucus Nicator made his sacrifice to Zeus on Mt. Kasios on the

---

17) More on St. George in European folklore in Frazer, The *Golden Bough* (1922), vol. II, p. 333, 344 ffé

18) Cf. T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (1927), p. 137, and *passim*; Charles Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammouz dans l'Orient antique* (1904), p. 186.

19) B. Carra de Vaux, in *Encyclopedia of Islam,* I, p. 1047.

23d of April.[20]) This establishes that day as an important feast day of one of the most celebrated deities of Northern Syria. Zeus Kasios is none other than Baal Saphon, the Baal Sapan of the Ras Shamra texts.[21]) The mountain (today's *Jabal al-Aqra'*) was celebrated in the mythologies of the ancient Hittites as Mt. Hazzi,[22]) in the mythology of Ugarit as Mt. Sapan, and in the Greek and Hellinistic mythology as Mt. Kasios.

St. George's feast date displays a rustic character which fits the georgic cult. It has no apparent basis in astrometry, but depends on meteorological considerations. The great influence of Babylonian, Egyptian, and Hellenistic astral religious interpretations can still be felt in the religious calendar of the contemporary world. To the peasant, however, St. George's day remains of great significance because of its relevance to his agricultural activities. So is, by the way, the 20th of July which the church assigned to St. Elias, and the 15th of August which is assigned to St. Mary's assumption.

The fertilistic powers of Khidr are well recognized. The most poetic description of these powers is found in the Arabian Nights: the holy *walī* "equalizes the seasons, recrowns the trees with royal green, unbinds the fleeting streams, spreads out grass carpets on the meadows, and hangs his light green mantle in the evening air to color the skies after the sun has set."[23])

The peasants of Palestine, praying for rain, have a chant directed to Khidr-Elias:

My lord Khidr, the green one,
Water our green plants.
My lord Mar-Elias
Water our dry plants.[24]

---

20) Malalas, *Chronicles,* Bk. viii (transl. by Spinka and Downey, Chicago, 1940), p. 13.

21) On Baal Sapan (Zaphon) = Zeus Kasion: J. W. Jack, *The Ras Shamra Tablets, Their Bearing on the Old Testament* (1935); O. Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer* (1932); R. De Langhe, *Les Textes de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et leurs rapports avec le milieu biblique de l'Ancien Testament* (1945), II, p. 139 ff.

22) Goetze, in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* LXXIX (1940), pp. 32-34.

23) *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night,* transl. E. P. Mathers (1930), vol. 4, p. 83.

24) T. Canaan, *op. cit.,* p. 232.

Folklore all over Syria assigns the cause of thunder and lightning to either one of the three georgic saints. St. George and Khidr (also Ali in some Nusairi lore) cause thunder and lightning by riding a horse across the sky. In the case of Khidr (Ali) the lightning is caused by the horse's hoofs striking the rocks (?). St. George, however, does it with his spear, or trident, presumably while pursuing the dragon. Elias, on the other hand, causes thunder and lightning by driving his firey chariot across the sky. Many other variations of these tales can be found all over the land, but all of them point out that rain, thunder, and lightning are closely associated with the georgic saints.

The georgic attributes of Elijah are quite obvious. The picture of Elijah one gets from the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, is that of a prophet-saint who has complete control over rain. He could "shut up the heaven" (Luke 4:25). "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (James 5:7f., cp. I Kings 17:1; 18:1-46).

Elijah's powers brought a dead child back to life and produced an extended supply of food from a "barrel of meal" and a "cruse of oil.' (I Kings 17) As a rain maker, Elijah used water on the alter in his contest with the priests of Baal (I Kings 18:34). As a rain maker, the name of Elijah-Elias still lives in popular religion all over the Near East. His attributes are quite reminiscent of those of Zeus and Baal as sky and weather deities. In most countries of Europe and the Near East the cult of Elias is linked with rain, clouds, lightning, and thunder.[25]) Places dedicated to Elias all over the Levant, as well as in Greece and other parts of the Mediterranean lands, are visited especially in time of drought to invoke the powers of the saint over rain.

Power and Militancy

The central theme of fertility which links the georgic saints to the forces of nature leads, on one side, to the display of power and militancy, and on the other to a preoccupation with life and death, sacrifice and martyrdom. Thunder, lightning, wind and rain, as bene-

25) On the cult of Elias in Greece and Eastern Europe see A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (1914-1940), vol. I, pp. 182 ff.

volent forces of nature, display what appears to be an inherent aggressive power which, at times, turns malevolent and destructive.

The aggressive side of the deity or the saint seems to be most popular in the pictorial and plastic representations. The theme of struggle and display of power presents itself more clearly to human visualization than does the more subtle fertilistic aspects. The great fightning power of the saint or deity is the dramatization of this fertilizing power—a dramatization which stresses the unpredictibility of this power and the necessity to ward off its evil and destructiveness.

St. George

Pictorial representations of St. George almost constantly show his militant character. The icons of St. George, as one can observe in most churches in the Levant and elsewhere, depict him riding a magnificent horse, driving his weapon, a trident in many cases, a lance or a sword in some other, into the dragon. This show of militarism presents a striking contrast, and a significant one, to the emphasis on passivity and weakness found in almost all the other icons of the saints and martyrs of the Church, and especially the central piece of the crucified Christ.

This display of unusual power seems to appeal to the militant spirit found in most men. Without St. George, militancy would have been without a patron saint in Christianity. This may explain why the saint gained such a degree of popularity in Europe especially during and after the Crusades. St. George is credited with helping the crusaders in their battles. William of Malmesbury tells how St. George and Demetrius, the "Martyr Knights," were seen assisting the Franks at the battle of Antioch in 1098.[26]) The strong arm and sharp weapons of St. George will be needed even at the end of the world: a popular tale in Palestine says that St. George will, at the second coming of Christ, slay the antichrist at the door of St. George's church in Lydda.

Since the militancy of St. George is based primarily on his contest with and triumph over the dragon, the origin of the militant George is probably to be found in the tradition of the ancient fighting gods of Syria and Babylonia. Many of these dragon-fighting gods populated the Near East, most famous among them are Marduk, Adad, and

26) *Gesta Regnum* ii, 420.

Ashur. However, Baal-Hadad of the Ugaritic texts is the most likely prototype of the dragon-fighting George. The assumption can be made that the present shrines of St. George all along the Syrian coast were, in pre-Christian times, places of worship dedicated to Baal-Hadad or to one of his many local types. The most famous shrine of St. George in the Levant, the al-Humayra monastery situated between Tripoli and Homs close to an intermittant source of water, was of great repute in Roman times, and probably in more ancient times as well. Josephus mentions that Titus, on his return from Jerusalem, paid a special visit to the "sabbatical" fountain, probably to pay tribute for his military victory. [27])

Khidr

Khidr's military virtues are strongly emphasized in popular Muslim and Nusairi traditions. Pictorial representations of the militant Khidr, due to the sanction on representation of the human form in Islam, are very rare. The popular lore about Khidr, however, is full of tales of his strength and valor. The peasants of Syria refer to him as *abū ḥarba* (father of the lance), thus indicating that militancy is his basic characteristic. Stories about the strength of his arm are enhanced by pointing out certain rocks that he had hurled from enormous distances. A cylindrical stone about six feet high on the seashore below the Crusaders' castle of Marqab, is said to be such a missile. The Nusairi version of the story sometimes substitutes the name of Ali for that of Khidr: the stone was hurled by him all the way from Mecca. Nusairi women visit the cylindrical stone—no doubt a phallic symbol—to invoke the power of the saint to give them children. The idea of fertility in women is here in understandable combination with the theme of power and strength attributed to the georgic saint.

Khidr's strides, according to some accounts, are miles apart. In Beit Jālā, near Jerusalem, he left the print of one foot in a rock which is visited by devotees for its healing power. The Czar of Russia, a popular tale says, once sent a warship to take the stone to his capital. The stone was moved to Jaffa and loaded on board; but George-Khidr kept forcing the ship back to the harbor with his huge spear. [28]) The stone

---

27) Josephus, *De Bello Jud.* vii, 5, 1.
28) T. Canaan, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Hanauer, *Folklore of the Holy Land*, p. 52.

was returned to its place and is still there in an enclosure. It is sacred to Muslims and Christians alike.

The valor of Khidr as a knight in battle is proverbial in popular Islam. The historian Ibn al-Athīr tells the story of a great Arab knight, Abu Muḥjin, who distinguished himself so greatly in battle against the Persians that he was thought to be Khidr himself. [29]) A poet, praising the victories of the Caliph al-Musta^{c}ṣim, said:

> You overran the distant territories with such speed
> As though you were following in the footsteps of Khidr. [30]

Elijah

The biblical account of Elijah presents him, in contrast with the rest of the prophets of Israel, more as a man of action than a poet or a visionary. His exploits sometimes are so violent, without apparent justification. His massacre of 450 priests of Baal may dubiously be justified by religous zeal; but his extermination of one hundred soldiers sent to bring him to the king display an exaggerated aggressivity (2 Kings 1:3-16). His weapon of destruction is fire from heaven. Although he is not depicted as a knight or horseman, his chariot and horses of fire are even more spectacular as symbols of power. He also could divide the waters of the Jordan by smiting the river with his mantle (2 Kings 2:8). The power to destroy, the chariot of fire, and the control of rivers relate Elijah very strongly to the other georgic figures.

Another symbol of power of the georgic saints is their association with mountains and promontories. Elijah's association with the mountain is especially strong. It is reminiscent of the emphasis placed by the ancient Canaanites on Baal as god of mountains and high places. Elijah's association with mountains include his triumph over Baal's priests on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:20ff), his experience on Mt. Horeb (I Kings 19) and, in the New Testament account, his appearance with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mat. 17:3).

In Syria, as well as in Greece and other countries, the shrines of St. Elias, just as many *maqāms* of Khidr, are built on promontories. Most mountain tops which were dedicated to Zeus in ancient Greece are now dedicated to St. Elias. [31]) Mt. Carmel, known in ancient times

---

29) Ibn al-Athīr, *Kitāb al-kāmil fil-tārīkh* (Leiden 1867), p. 369.

30) Al-Hamadhāni, *Kitāb al-buldān* (Leiden 1802), p. 52.

31) A complete list of these names in Greece is found in A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, vol. I, pp. 177 ff.

for its shrine of Baal [32]) is called by the Arabs of Palestine *Jabal Mār Eliās.*

In Christian popular lore, Elias displays most of the attributes of a god of the atmosphere. He controls clouds, rain, the lighning, and thunder. His aggressivity can become destructive just as the ancient Baal-Zeus. In destroying the hundred soldiers he used fire from heaven, a form of lightning. A flaming sword is one of the attributes of Elias in representations of him all through Christendom.

Maritime power

Another strong link between the georgic saints and the ancient Syrian Baals is their patronage of seamen and their control over the sea. The ancient Baals of the Syrian coast were recognized as gods of the sea, navigation, and mariners. Ancient records are abundent with invocation of these Baals, especially the Tyrian Baal and the Baal of Sidon, for the protection of ships or for the destruction of enemy fleets. The Assyrian kings even used to call on the Syrian Baal to destroy the ships of their enemies. [33]) The maritime character of Baal-Hadad of Ugarit is clearly indicated by his struggle with the genius of the sea and the river, Yam-Nahar. His triumph over the sea gives him control over his domain. [34]) Hittite atmospheric gods fought maritime dragons and monsters. However, in some cases, the myths of the Hittites are not clear about the outcome of the contests. [35]) The Greek god Poseidon, in addition to his maritime attributes, is also a fertility god. As such he is the closest of all ancient Greek gods to our georgic saints. [36])

Khidr is known popularly as *khawwāḍ al buḥūr*, "roamer of the seas." He is the favorite *walī* of the mariners and fishermen along the Syrian coast, especially on the small island of Arwād, the ancient

32) On Mt. Carmel as a holy mountain, see Eissfeldt, *Der Gott Karmel*; Jaussen, „La fête de Saint Elie au Mont Carmel" in *Revue Biblique* (1924), pp. 249-59.

33) D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago, 1926, 1927), vol. I, p. 587.

34) Text and translation in G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (1956), pp. 80 ff.

35) On Hittite religion: O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (1952, pp. 132-177; H. G. Güterbock, in Ferm, *Forgotten Religions*, pp. 80 ff; also his *Kumarbi...* (1946); G. Furlani, *La Religione degli Hittiti* (1936).

36) E. Wust, in Pauly Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie ...* (1953), vol. 17, col. 446 557.

Aradus. The seamen, especially, refer to Khidr as *rayyis* "captain." The fame of Khidr as patron saint of navigation reached India: *Raja Kidar* is said to guard against the perils of navigation. [37])

A shrine dedicated to Khidr-George still stands near the seaport of Sweidiyyah on the mouth of the Orontes river. The shrine is far from any habitation, standing on a promontory overlooking the bay. Until recently, it contained a lighted lamp, supposedly to guide boatmen along the coast. A similar shrine of St. George dominated the Bay of Juniyeh, north of Beirut. The bay of Beirut (also a well-known hotel overlooking the bay) is named after St. George.

The maritime character of both St. George and Khidr is well established. Elijah's power over the river can be classified in the same category. However, Palestinian folklore makes a distinction between the domain of Elias and that of Khidr. A popular saying goes: *Al-Khidr mukallaf fil-baḥr wa Iliyyā mukallaf fil-barr* "Khidr is responsible for the sea and Iliyya is responsible for the land." Other accounts reverse the assignments delegating the sea to Iliyya.

Of Death and Eternal Life

The range of attributes of the georgic saints, as has been demonstrated so far, is very wide. Their "influence" covers the whole gamut of the aspects of fertility in nature. They have power over the domains of the sky, the mountains, the sea, and the rivers. As such, they seem to have some of the attributes of sky deities as well as those of earth deities, agressive ones, and passive ones. Combining these two poles of attributes in one divine person is not common in the history of religion.

The best example of a nature and fertility deity who triumphed in both these poles is Baal-Hadad of Ugarit. This cloud and rain deity, master of the thunder and lightning, triumphs over the divine dragon Yam-Nahar by attacking him with his mighty weapons and crushing him to humiliating defeat. In this, he conforms to the pictorial representations which depict him mostly with his lightning rod or axe, striding on a bull, or standing on a mountain. This is the concept we

---

37) A. B. Keith, "Indian Mythology" in *The Mythology of All Races,* vols. VI, p. 235.

find especially emphasized in Assyrian documents referring to Adad. [38])

But the Ras Shamra texts also present Baal-Hadad in the role of martyr, a chtonic deity. Unlike the contest with Yam-Nahr, Baal submits willingly and meekly to Mot "death" when that demon challenged him. His death in the entrails of Mot and his coming back to life later symbolize the death and revival of fertility in plants and in animals. [39])

St. George

Although St. George is basically a patron saint of the fields and of sources of water, of the green plans and the productive forces in nature, he is, in addition to that, a martyr as well as a hero fighter. As martyr, folk tales recount that he was killed many times and that parts of his mutilated body were scattered all over the hilltops of Syria (cp. Dionysus-Zagreus). The monastery of St. George of al-Humayra referred to above is supposed to be built on the spot where the saint's lung was deposited. Yet he lives on; he rides his charger and he kills the dragon; he causes the lightning and produces thunder. Baal-Hadad of Ugarit of the second millenium B.C. has apparently projected his dual nature into the person of St. George. The modern saint keeps Baal's controle over nature's fertilistic powers. Also, like the old Baal, he is killed many times and is, therefore, a martyr, a dying-god.

The role of St. George as a dying-god of the Tammuz-Adonis type seems to have diminished to the point of vanishing in modern Levantine religious lore. However, up to the Middle Ages, the cult of St. George was similar, if not identical, to that of Tammuz. At the time when the old Tammuz rites still existed, especially in the northern Syrian district of Harran, both "pagan" (Sabaeans to Arab historians) and Christians were celebrating in similar fashion for Tammuz and *Jurjīs* respectively. Ibn Wahshiyyah, in 1498, writes in his book on Nabatean agriculture, *Kitāb al-filāḥa al-nabaṭiyyah,* which is said to be a translation of an old "chaldean" manuscript by *Ibn al-Qutāmi,* about the religious feasts of the Sabaean and Christian peasants. He

---

38) For names and attributes of Adad: H. Schlobies, *Der akkadische Wettergott in Mesopotamien* (1925).

39) Baal's contest with Mot: Driver, *Canaanite Myths,* pp. 102-109.

tells the story of the Sabaean Tammuz, comparing and equating him with the Christian Jurjīs: "The story of Tammūz..." he writes, "in the book of the Nabateans... is the same as the story of Jurjīs of the Christians..." [40]) The author goes on to describe the many deaths of Jurjīs as well as his great influence on vegetation.

Ibn al-Athīr, in the 13th century, describes the death of Jurjīs in terms parallel to those of the crucifiction: "When he died God sent stormy winds and thunder and lightning and dark clouds, so that darkness fell between heaven and earth, and for days people were in great wonderment... [41]) The darkness was lifted, according to that account, after the saint came back to life.

Al-Thaᶜlabi is more precise about the trials and tribulations of Jurjis. He contends that he came from Palestine and lived in the time of some of Jesus' desciples. The king of Mosul killed him many times, but he came back to life after each killing. When the king tried to starve him to death a woman brought him a piece of dry wood and it turned green, all sorts of vegetables and fruits issuing forth from it. Even the chairs in the king's palace became green and grew leaves. After the fourth attempt to kill Jurjīs the whole city was burned down with him. [42])

These accounts point out clearly the identity of St. George (Jurjīs) as a dying and resurrecting deity who was identified, especially in Mesopotamia, as Tammuz. This identity most probably survived well into the sixteenth century A.D.

Khidr and Elias

Death and resurrection is a theme which does not appear clearly in the Khidr and Elias legends. However, it is significant that both these saints escaped death completely. To the Semitic mind, the divinity cannot be subjected to death in any form. Thus Islam rejects Christian accounts of the death of Jesus who, according to the Quᵓan, is of the spirit of Allah. This divine spirit in *ᶜIsa* makes him immune from pain and death; he lives eternally, according to the Qurᵓanic doctrine, just as Khidr is living eternally, according to the popular

40) Original text and German translation in D. A. Chwolson, *Über Tammuz und die Menschenverehrung bei den Alten Babyloniern* (1860), pp. 41-49.
41) Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil* (Leiden 1867), vol. I, p. 367.
42) Al-Thaᶜlabi, *Qiṣaṣ*, pp. 244-45.

beliefs. This quality in Khidr is a clear indication of his divine origin. Some extreme Shi'ites believe that Husayn was not actually killed, that he is only hidden from sight, and that he will reappear again to set things right. Khidr, also, appears from time to time. In between, he is hidden from sight.

Elijah escaped death by being taken alive to heaven. He will come back to herald the Messiah. But, even in the Biblical story, Elijah displayed a great ability to hide, to disappear and reappear at will, his disappearances clearly linked to drought over the land.

Eternal life is an important attribute of both Elias and Khidr. The Syrians refer to Elias as *Mār Iliās al-ḥayy* "The Living Lord Elias." Arab philologists interpreted the name of Elias as *al-'ās* "the myrtle," which is the symbol of immortality. Folklore maintains that Elias and Khidr, having survived to the first revelation of Muhammad, expressed to him their wish to die, but Muhammad answered, "O Khidr, it is your duty to aid my community in the desert, and you, O Iliās must aid them at sea." [43])

In georgic religion death and resurrection as well as hiding and reappearance are two different but closely related motifs in the divine drama, both indicating cyclic change as well as eternal continuity. The difference between these two motifs can be attributed, partially at least, to cultural and ecological factors. In predominantly agricultural societies sacred death and resurrection conform more closely to the cycle of fertility in plants, while the temporary absence of the sacred person is more in tune with tribal societies depending primarily on hunting and herding.

We can trace these traditions very far back into history. In the second millennium B.C., for example, the Baal of Ugarit died in the dark insides of Mot, symbolizing the death of vegetation. His revival brought back life into the valleys and green to the pastures. By contrast, Telepinu, a fertility deity of the Hittites, an Anatolian community of warring tribes in the process of empire building (prototype of the Ottoman Turks) did not die; he only went away and slept soundly.

---

43) Cf. A. J. Wensinck, art. "Ilyas" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*. This is a reversal of the roles of Khidr and Elias mentioned above. Maritime muslims (in Palestine, for example) claim Khidr to be a patron of the sea, while muslims of the interior prefer to have him in charge of the desert.

Finding him and waking him up was a feat that symbolized the return of order and prosperity to the community.[44])

To summarize: all three representatives of georgic religion in the Levant, George, Khidr, and Elias, display attributes of the gods of fertility. They all tend to become militant heroes. However, only George reaches martyrdom and the taste of death. Khidr and Elias are barred from martyrdom by sanctions of Jewish and Islamic religious doctrines. Muslim peasants, nevertheless, find their martyrs and their redeemers in Christian shrines which they venerate with great fervor. In some cases, they created their own martyrs by transforming a historical personality to this type of deity, as is the case of Husayn in Shi'ism.

Georgic saints and georgic cults in the Levant can only have their origin in the ancient Syrian "baalic" tradition. Baal, as lord of the sky and fertilizer of the earth, has survived through the ages in the religious cults of the Levantine agricultural communities—as a prophet in Judaism, as a saint in Christianity, and as a *walī* in Islam.

---

44) Goetze, in *Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, pp. 26 f.; Gaster, *Thespis*, pp. 353 ff.; Güterbock in *Forgotten Religions*, p. 101. Ugaritic text of the death of Baal-Hadad in C. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (1947). Text and translation in G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths*, pp. 103 ff.

WAHRHEIT UND SKEPSIS IM AZTEKISCHEN DENKEN

VON

GÜNTER LANCZKOWSKI

Heidelberg

In memoriam Friedrich Heiler

Für die indianischen Hochkulturen des präkolumbischen Amerika ist übereinstimmend bezeugt, dass in ihnen ein absolut positives Verhältnis zur Wahrheit gepflegt und gefordert wurde. Für die Wertschätzung der Wahrheit als moralischem Faktor der Charakterbildung im Reiche der Inka ist es bezeichnend, dass noch in unseren Tagen die Jugend bolivianischer Schulen ermahnt wird mit den Worten: *ama sua, ama llulla, ama kella,* „Nicht sollst du stehlen, nicht lügen, nicht faulenzen" [1]). Dabei geht nicht allein der Gebrauch der inkaischen Staatssprache des Quetschua auf die Zeit indianischer Eigenstaatlichkeit vor dem Einbruch der Conquista zurück, sondern auch die Formulierung dieser Gebote und damit ihr ethisches Anliegen, der Sittenkodex, den sie bezeugen. Denn die Religion des inkaischen Reiches kannte den Begriff der Sünde (*hucha*), und sie subsumierte diesem Begriff ausdrücklich das Vergehen der Lüge (*llulla*). Der Lügner (*llullak*) war verpflichtet, speziellen Beichtpriestern (*ichuri*) sein frevlerisches Verhalten im Vollzug einer Beichte zu bekennen, deren indianische Existenz die ersten im Gefolge der kriegerischen Conquista ins Land gekommenen Missionare geistlichen Standes mit erheblichem Erstaunen beobachteten [2]).

Aus dem Bereich der yucatekischen Maya des Neuen Reiches sind durch eine ihrer heiligen Schriften, das Buch des Chilam Balam von

---

1) HERMANN TRIMBORN, Die Religionen der Völkerschaften des südlichen Mittelamerika und des nördlichen und mittleren Andenraumes, in: KRICKEBERG - TRIMBORN - MÜLLER - ZERRIES, Die Religionen des alten Amerika, Stuttgart 1961, S. 156.

2) LOUIS BAUDIN, So lebten die Inkas vor dem Untergang des Reiches, Stuttgart 1957, S. 149 f.

Chumayel [3]), Prüfungstexte überliefert, mit deren Hilfe der Halach Uinic, der „wahre Mann", der oberste Herrscher Yucatans, die Legitimität adliger Kandidaten für hohe Verwaltungsposten ermittelte [4]). Gefordert wurde in diesen Examina die Kenntnis eines Geheimwissens, das ausschliesslich in den herrschenden Familien des Adels vom Vater auf den Sohn tradiert wurde. Neben der Pflege und Förderung dieses esoterischen Wissens selbst hatten daher jene Prüfungen den Zweck, zu ermitteln, ob sich der junge Kandidat zu Recht als Angehöriger des Adels bezeichnet oder eine solche Herkunft erlogen hatte. Es spricht für die rigorose Strenge, mit der das Prinzip absoluter Wahrhaftigkeit verfolgt wurde, dass am Schluss des Examens den Unwissenden und damit einer fälschlichen Behauptung seiner Adelszugehörigkeit Überführten, den erwiesenen Lügner also, die härtesten Strafen trafen. Die Zungenspitze wurde ihm abgeschnitten, die Augen ausgerissen, und schliesslich fand er durch Erhängen den Tod [5]).

Die Verletzung der Wahrheitspflicht, die bei den Maya so unnachgiebiger Sühne unterlag, galt auch den Azteken als schmähliches und strafwürdiges Verhalten. Die Lüge (*iztlactli*) wurde im religiösen Sinne als Verfehlung, als Sünde (*tlatlacolli*) betrachtet; und es spricht für einen ausgeprägten Abscheu der Azteken gegenüber sündhaftem Verhalten, dass der Sünder (*tlatlacoani*) auch als *tlaelquani*, als „Dreckfresser", bezeichnet wurde [6]).

Bei ihrer Forderung nach unbedingter Wahrhaftigkeit legten die Azteken an die führenden Schichten die strengsten Maßstäbe, weil diese dem niederen Volke Vorbilder sein sollten. In den umfangreichen Relationen, die uns Bernardino de Sahagún in aztekischer Sprache überliefert hat, finden sich auch Abschnitte über die Erziehung der Prinzen königlichen Geblüts. Deren Ausbildung wurde abgeschlossen durch Kampfhandlungen, in denen sie sich auf kriegerischem Gebiet zu bewähren hatten. Jedoch erstreckte sich diese Prüfung nicht allein auf

---

3) Ralph L. Roys, The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication No. 438), Washington 1933.

4) Vgl. G. Lanczkowski, Die Sprache von Zuyua als Initiationsmittel, in: Initiation. Contributions to the Theme of the Study-Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions, held at Strasburg, September 17th to 22nd 1964, edited by C. J. Bleeker, Leiden 1965, S. 27-39.

5) Roys, a.a.O., S. 92.

6) Vgl. Georg Höltker, Das Sündenbewusstsein bei den Azteken im alten Mexiko, in: Anthropos 31, 1936, S. 222 f.

Geschicklichkeit und Mut, sie enthielt vielmehr auch eine Kontrolle der Aufrichtigkeit und Wahrheitsliebe der jungen Fürsten, die den Examina der Maya in formaler und intentioneller Hinsicht nahesteht. Auch im aztekischen Bereich trat der Herrscher, der König Mexikos, persönlich als Prüfer auf, und Sahagún berichtet, dass Motecuçoma II., nachdem er die Meldung über Rückkehr und Erfolg der jungen Adligen erhalten hatte, sich an diese wandte mit den Worten [7]: „Ihr habt euch müde gelaufen, habt Mühsal erduldet, o ihr tapferen Krieger, setzt euch nieder. — Vielleicht belügt ihr mich (*annechiztlacauia*), lasst mich die Wahrheit des Berichtes schauen!" Die Adligen wurden daraufhin eingeschlossen bis zur Überprüfung ihrer Meldungen, und wenn diese falsch waren, wurden sie auch hier mit dem Tode bestraft [8]: „Wenn sie einen unwahren Bericht zu Gehör brachten, lässt Motecuçoma sie töten."

Das unabdingbare Ideal der Wahrhaftigkeit galt selbstverständlich auch für die andere privilegierte Schicht des Aztekenreiches, für die Priester. Uns sind die Regeln überliefert, nach denen sich das Leben im „Priesterhause" vollzog, dem *calmecac* [9], das zugleich Schule und Ausbildungsstätte sowohl künftiger Geistlicher als auch der Söhne des Adels war. Neben disziplinären, zeremoniellen und schulischen Anweisungen umfassen diese Regeln auch moralische Gebote. Unter ihnen ist die „fünfzehnte Regel für das Leben im *calmecac*" bezeichnend, die in einem Bekenntnis zur Wahrhaftigkeit gipfelt; sie lautet [10]: „Die Priester gelobten Enthaltsamkeit, reinen Lebenswandel, nirgends Frauen zu sehen; sie gelobten ein mässiges Leben. Niemand log."

Der Patron des *calmecac* war Quetzalcoatl, der später vergöttlichte Priesterkönig der toltekischen Zeit, die der Herrschaft der Azteken auf dem Hochland Mexikos vorangegangen war; und es kann kein Zweifel darüber bestehen, dass zumindest im Bereich des priesterlichen Lebens mit der Ethik unbedingter Wahrhaftigkeit bewusst ein Ideal der Tolteken gepflegt wurde, deren Erbe die aztekische Zeit willig anerkannte; denn die Azteken berichteten franziskanischen Missiona-

---

7) EDUARD SELER, Einige Kapitel aus dem Geschichtswerk des Fray Bernardino de Sahagun, Stuttgart 1927, S. 330 f.

8) a.a.O.

9) Die wörtliche und sachliche Bedeutung von *calmecac* kommt unserem Begriff "Kloster" am nächsten.

10) SAHAGUN-SELER, a.a.O., S. 354.

ren noch zur Zeit der Conquista über die Tolteken [11]): „Diese Tolteken waren in jeder Weise rechtschaffen, nicht lügnerisch waren sie ... Sie sprachen: es ist wahr, es ist so, es ist ausgemacht in Wahrheit; ja, nein."

Umfangreiche Texte in aztekischer Sprache, die Familie, Stände und Berufe des alten Mexiko beschreiben [12]), betonen das Prinzip der Wahrheit in einer Weise, die zeigt, dass mit ihm ein schlechthinniges Anliegen für die Formung nicht allein des toltekischen, sondern auch des aztekischen Menschen verbunden war. Diese Texte stellen die verschiedenen Berufe in antithetischer Weise dar, indem sie jeweils zunächst den guten und dann den schlechten Vertreter eines Berufes schildern. Dabei ist es bezeichnend, dass die Qualität der Wahrheit zu einem wesentlichen Charakteristikum des guten Vertreters eines Berufes zählt, während der schlechte direkt als Lügner bezeichnet oder in diesem Sinne umschrieben wird; häufig wird dabei die abwertende Bezeichnung *chamatl*, „Großsprecher, Prahler", gebraucht.

Einige signifikante Beispiele können den Grundtenor dieser Texte demonstrieren. Besonders schön ist jene Stelle, die von dem rechten „Weisen" (*tlamatini*) handelt, der „ein Lehrer der Wahrheit (*neltiliztli temachtiani*) ist, ein Mahner, ein Erzieher, der das gute Beispiel gibt" [13]). Als Lügner wird der schlechte Rechtsanwalt gebrandmarkt, wenn es von ihm heisst [14]): „Er ist doppelzünzig". In einem Text über den schlechten Sachwalter wird zwar dessen Lügenhaftigkeit nicht direkt genannt, steht aber im Hintergrund der folgenden, für das aztekische Verhältnis zur Wahrheit überaus bezeichnenden Aussage [15]): Der schlechte Sachwalter „verdient, dass ihm ein Aderlasspflaster (über den Mund) gelegt werde, dass ihm die Lippen zusammengepresst werden, dass ihm ein Heilmittel für sein Mundwerk bereitet werde; ja, man presst ihm die Lippen zusammen, man klebt ein Aderlasspflaster darauf."

Es verwundert nicht, dass das mexikanische Verhältnis zu Wahrheit und Lüge auch im Recht seinen Ausdruck fand. Nezahualcoyotl, der

11) a.a.O., S. 395.
12) Leonhard Schultze Jena, Gliederung des alt-aztekischen Volks in Familie, Stand und Beruf (Quellenwerke zur alten Geschichte Amerikas, Bd. 5), Stuttgart 1952.
13) a.a.O., S. 74 f.
14) a.a.O., S. 80 f.
15) a.a.O., S. 80 f.

von 1418 bis 1472 regierende Fürst der Stadt Tezcoco, die mit Mexiko-Tenochtitlan und Tlacopan den das Hochland beherrschenden Dreibund bildete, ist nicht allein mit seinem Rückgriff auf die Verehrung des altmexikanischen Hochgottes als religiöser Reformator aufgetreten [16]), sondern auch als Gesetzgeber [17]). Das Recht Nezahualcoyotls ahndete lügnerisches Verhalten in der Weise, dass es auf schwere öffentliche Verleumdung die Todesstrafe setzte; auf falsche Anklage und falsches gerichtliches Zeugnis legte es Talion, indem es dem der falschen Aussage Überführten jene Strafe auferlegte, die die angezeigte Tat nach sich gezogen hätte [18]).

Einen — wahrscheinlicch tragischen — Höhepunkt fand der aztekische Abscheu vor Unwahrhaftigkeit bei der Verbrennung der Leiche des zuvor getöteten Motecuçoma II., dessen Verhalten beim Einmarsch der Spanier und in den erregenden Ereignissen jener Tage höchstwahrscheinlich von seinem eigenen Volke nicht ganz gerecht beurteilt worden ist. Jedenfalls beschimpften ihn die Azteken noch im Tode, und ihr Zorn gipfelte in den Worten [19]): „Vieles war erlogen, wofür er die Leute büssen liess, war falsch, war erfundenes Gerede."

Sicherlich betreffen die bisherigen Ausführungen und die beigebrachten Belege allein eine subjektive Wahrheit, eine Wahrhaftigkeit, die als sittliche Grundhaltung des Menschen verstanden ist. Jedoch haben auch die Azteken diese Wahrhaftigkeit metaphysisch begründet gesehen in einer letzten, schlechthinnigen Wahrheit, die die Normen des ethischen Verhaltens setzt.

Darauf verweist bereits der aztekische Terminus für „Wahrheit", das Wort *neltiliztli*, dessen Stamm *nel* einen Bedeutungskreis von „unerschütterlich Begründetem, absolut Wirklichem und Wahren" umfasst [20]). Das aber sind Qualitäten, die die Azteken gerade im irdischen Dasein nicht zu finden vermochten. Ihre Gesänge sind voll der Klagen

---

16) Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, Das Buch der Könige von Tezcuco, bearb. von H. G. Bonte, Leipzig 1930, S. 108 f.; vgl. Walter Krickeberg, Bauform und Weltbild im alten Mexico, in: Mythe, Mensch und Umwelt, hrsg. von Ad. E. Jensen, Bamberg 1950, S. 301.

17) Ixtlilxochitl, S. 71 f.

18) J. Kohler, Das Recht der Azteken, Stuttgart 1892, S. 89.

19) Sahagun-Seler, S. 513.

20) Miguel Leon-Portilla, La Filosofia Nahuatl. Estudiada en sus fuentes, Mexico 1959, S. 59: "... la sílaba temática NEL- connota originalmente la idea de "fijación sólida, o enraizamiento profundo"."

über die Vergänglichkeit des Irdischen und beherrscht von dem Gedanken: „Wir leben hier auf Erden in Trauer und Tränen" [21]). Und wenn ein aztekischer Dichter die rhetorische Frage stellt: „Ist etwa hier auf Erden unser Heim?" [22]), so setzt er eine verneinende Antwort voraus. Denn nach aztekischer Anschauung steht dieser keinesfalls fest begründeten, vielmehr vergänglichen und von ihrem Ende bedrohten Welt [23]) ein Bereich der unerschütterlichen Wirklichkeit und Wahrheit gegenüber, der im obersten Himmel lokalisiert wurde, dem Wohnort des alten Hochgottes Mexikos, der in bezeichnender Weise als *nelli teotl,* als „wahrer Gott", angesprochen wurde. Bei ihm ist der Platz, wo man *wahrhaft* lebt [24]); die Seele des Kindes wird von dort ins irdische Leben gesandt [25]); und nur wer sich dieser Herkunft bewusst bleibt, kann überhaupt auf Erden die Wahrheit sprechen [26]).

Der enge Bezug subjektiver Wahrhaftigkeit zu ihrer metaphysischen Begründung kommt auch zum Ausdruck in der numinosen Gestalt Tezcatlipocas, eines Aspektes des Hochgottes [27]), und in seiner Funktion als „allwissendem Gott", der „das Innere der Menschen kennt" (*teitic tlamati mati*) [28]) und damit den intimsten Bezirk von Wahrheit und Lüge zu durchschauen vermag [29]).

---

21) Leonhard Schultze Jena, Alt-Aztekische Gesänge (Quellenwerke zur alten Geschichte Amerikas, Bd. 6), Stuttgart 1957, S. 21.

22) a.a.O., S. 69.

23) Vgl. August Freiherr von Gall, Weltende und seine Vorzeichen im Glauben der alten Azteken, in: Nachrichten der Giessener Hochschulgesellschaft, Bd. 7. Heft 2, (1923), S. 34-45.

24) Leon-Portilla, a.a.O., S. 214: "Así, con un supremo acto de confianza en el Dador de la vida, de quien se espera que no envió a los hombres a la tierra para vivir en vano y sufrir, se sostiene que *rostro y corazón*: la persona humana, elevándose al fin, logrará escapar del mundo transitorio de *tlalticpac*, para encontrar la felicidad buscada allá "en el lugar donde de verdad se vive"."

25) Sahagun-Seler, S. 395: „Von dort kommt unsere Seele, wenn sie sich niederlässt, wenn niedertropfen die Kleinen, von dort her kommt die Seele." Vgl. auch Eduard Seler, Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Amerikanischen Sprach- und Altertumskunde, Bd. 4, Berlin 1923, Neudruck Graz 1961, S. 139.

26) Leon-Portilla, a.a.O., S. 143: "Quien logra obtener este influjo divino... es el único que puede decir "lo verdadero en la tierra"."

27) Vgl. Konrad Theodor Preuss und Ernst Mengin, Die mexikanische Bilderhandschrift Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca (Baessler-Archiv, Beiheft 9), Berlin 1937, S. 49; Josef Haekel, Hochgott und Götter im alten Mexiko. Kritische Bemerkungen zum Problem des Polytheismus, in: Kairos 1959, S. 136.

28) Sahagun-Seler, S. 264.

29) Raffaele Pettazzoni, L'onniscienza di Dio, Torino 1955, S. 596: "Nella "Historia General de las cosas de Nueva España" del frate francescano Bernar-

Es fragt sich, worin der aztekische Glaube an eine transzendente Wahrheit, die Sinn und Mass irdischer Wahrhaftigkeit darstellt, begründet war. In einem Augenblick, in dem die aztekischen Priester gezwungen sind, dem im Gefolge der Conquista missionierend vordringenden Christentum ihr Eigenstes entgegenzusetzen, geben sie Auskunft hierüber. Dies geschieht im Verlauf eines Religionsgesprächs, welches franziskanische Missionare mit aztekischen Adligen und Priestern führen.

Der uns erhaltene Text dieses franziskanisch-aztekischen Gesprächs zeigt, dass die Azteken dem Absolutheitsanspruch der christlichen Kirche, die den Begriff des Volkes pneumatisiert, den Traditionsbegriff ihrer Volksreligion gegenüberstellen. Die aztekischen Priester geben als Grundlage ihres Glaubens den Begriff *tlamanitiliztli* an, der die „Sitte", den „Brauch" und das durch diese Grössen legitimierte „Gesetz" bedeutet. Und nach diesem Bekenntnis zu ihrem im eigenen Volke überlieferten Glauben fragen die aztekischen Priester in einer Weise, die eine für ihr Empfinden ungeheuerliche Zumutung des Glaubenswechsels erkennen lässt [30]): „Und sollen etwa nun wir zerstören das alte Gesetz? — das Gesetz der Chichimeken, das Gesetz der Tolteken, das Gesetz derer von Colhuacan, das Gesetz der Tepaneken? Wir verstehen uns auf das, worin man geboren wird, wodurch man aufgezogen wird, wodurch man grossgezogen wird, nämlich wodurch die Götter angerufen, wodurch sie angebetet werden."

Hier wird der Begriff der Tradition (*tlamanitiliztli*), auf der die Wahrheit fusst und durch die sie legitimiert wird, in äusserst enge Be-Beziehung gesetzt zur Wahrheit selbst und damit fast wie ein Synonym zu *neltiliztli*, „Wahrheit", verwendet. Das aber bedeutet, dass eine Situation des Zweifels an dieser traditionellen Wahrheit zwei Bereiche erfasst, die unser modernes Denken weitaus stärker, als dies archaischen Auffassungen entspricht, voneinander sondert, nämlich einerseits die sakrale Sphäre und andererseits den Bereich völkischer Tra-

---

dino de Sahagun, si legge che Tezcatlipoca è colui che "conosce gli uomini" (*teimatini*, VI, 3), che "conosce il cuore degli uomini" (*quittani in teiollo*, VI, 4), che "conosce l'intimo degli uomini"."

30) WALTER LEHMANN, Sterbende Götter und christliche Heilsbotschaft. Wechselreden indianischer Vornehmer und spanischer Glaubensapostel in Mexiko 1524 (Quellenwerke zur alten Geschichte Amerikas, Bd. 3), Stuttgart 1949, S. 105.

dition, den der Azteke gern mit Begriffen aus dem Wortfeld von „Ruhm und Ehre" — wie *te(n)yotl* und *itauhcayotl* — ansprach.

Voraussetzungen für das Infragestellen herkömmlicher Wahrheiten bieten vor allem Zeiten des äusseren Umbruchs, der Zerstörung überkommener Ordnungen, wie sie für Mexiko mit dem Einbruch der Conquista erfolgte, der das Ende der eigenständigen Geistigkeit der Azteken bewirkte. In weltgeschichtlichen Maßstäben gesehen, ereignete sich dieses Ende der aztekischen Geistesgeschichte — wie auch dasjenige der übrigen altamerikanischen Hochkulturen — in erstaunlich raschem Ablauf. Nur wenige Jahre brachten die Entscheidung. Als die Spanier 1519 unter Cortés an der mexikanischen Ostküste landeten, leiteten sie eine Begegnung Europas mit dem alten Mexiko ein, die in unvergleichlich kurzer Zeit das Ende der geistigen Eigenständigkeit Mexikos zur Folge hatte. Bereits im gleichen Jahre zogen die Conquistadoren in die Hauptstadt Mexiko-Tenochtitlan ein. Später aufflammende Widerstände der Mexikaner und vorübergehende Misserfolge der Spanier waren nur von kurzer Dauer. Im Jahre 1521 ist Mexiko endgültig in spanischer Hand, und Gefangennahme sowie spätere Hinrichtung des Quauhtemoc, des „herabstossenden Adlers", des letzten Herrschers der Azteken, verbreiten unter den führenden Schichten seines Volkes eine Hoffnungslosigkeit, die auch den Bestand der eigenen geistigen Traditionen mit umschliesst.

Worte, die Motecuçoma II. in jenen Tagen des Vordringens der Spanier spricht, lassen einen Zweifel an Tradition und Bestand seines Reiches erkennen, hinter dem die skeptische Frage nach dem steht, was nun noch Wahrheit sei [31]): „Was wird auf uns kommen? Wer fürwahr steht noch aufrecht? Ach, früher war ich es. Voller Todesangst ist mein Herz, gleichsam in Pfefferwasser getaucht. Es brennt, es beisst. Wohin fürwahr, o Herr?" Und als Motecuçoma später erfährt, dass gegenüber dem spanischen Vormarsch die von ihm angeordneten Mittel seiner Religion, Zauber und kultische Akte, wirkungslos geblieben sind, spricht er zu den Grossen seines Reiches [32]): „Was sollen wir tun, o ihr Edlen? — Wir sind dahin, wir haben das Gift schon geschluckt ... Wir sind Mexikaner; soll denn wirklich der mexikanische Name sich unrühmlich erweisen? — ... Wir haben das Gift schon

31) Sahagun-Seler, S. 468.
32) a.a.O., S. 484.

geschluckt, was auch immer an schauervollen Dingen uns noch erwarten mag."

Nach der Conquista haben aztekische Dichter die melancholische Resignation jener Tage in Klagegesängen festgehalten, in denen neben Mexiko-Tenochtitlan meist noch die Schwesterstadt Tlatelolco stellvertretend für das Reich genannt wird. In diesen Dichtungen wird die geschichtspessimistische Einsicht in die Unentrinnbarkeit des eigenen Untergangs häufig verbunden mit einer Skepsis gegenüber der transzendenten Wahrheit, mit einer Anklage gegen den Hochgott der alten mexikanischen Religion, der in diesen Texten unter dem Namen Ipalnemoa, „durch den man lebt", erscheint. Die Verse eines Liedes, das mit „Klagegesang auf die Eroberung Mexikos durch Cortés" bezeichnet worden ist, lassen diese Skepsis deutlich werden [33]): „Nur Trauerblumen und Trauergesänge gibt es hier in Mexiko, in Tlatelolco, — ja, dort ist 's, wo Leid gefühlt wird. Unsichtbar ist das Gute, das Du, Ipalnemoa, uns doch einst getan hast ... Wir sind verstört und verbittert. Auf Deine Untertanen in Tlatelolco häuft sich Leid, da lernt man es kennen. Davon sind wir mürbe, verlassen sind wir, Ipalnemoa! ... So ist 's also geschehen, dass der Rauch, der aus Mexiko, der Stadt im Riedrohr, aufgestiegen ist, wie Nebel ausgebreitet liegt. Das ist Dein Werk, Ipalnemoa. Ihr Mexikaner bedenkt es: Er, er selbst, der Gott, hat sich angeschickt, gerade auf uns Angst und Pein herabzusenden ... Ihr, unsere Freunde, weinet Tränen, nehmt es euch zu Herzen, dass wir nun das Reich Mexiko preisgegeben haben. Der Trank ist bitter und auch die Speise ist bitter geworden. Ja, das hat Ipalnemoa in Tlatelolco getan!"

Was hier als Anklage gegen den alten Hochgott Mexikos erscheint, hatte bereits früher, im franziskanisch-aztekischen Religionsgespräch, eine letzte Steigerung im Zweifel an der Fortexistenz der aztekischen Götter überhaupt gefunden. Denn das Bekenntnis der aztekischen Priester zur überlieferten Wahrheit wurde nicht im Sinne eines zukunftsträchtigen Protestes vorgetragen, sondern mit einer tiefen Hoffnungslosigkeit, die erkennen lässt, dass sich die aztekischen Priester als letzte Bekenner einer dem Untergang geweihten Religion verstanden. Mit der Betonung ihrer geistlichen Aufgabe, den spanischen Missionaren zu widersprechen, verbanden die Priester den Ausdruck ihres Wunsches nach eigenem Untergang und Tod, der gipfelte in dem ent-

33) Schultze Jena, Alt-Aztekische Gesänge, S. 29 ff.

scheidenden Satze [34]): *„tel ca teteu in omjcque* — sind doch die Götter auch gestorben."

Geschichtsimmanente wie auch transzendente Zweifel sind in der Situation der Conquista nicht spontan ausgebrochen. Das Weltbild der Azteken [35]), das, wie für vier vorangegangene Zeitalter, so auch für das gegenwärtige fünfte ein Ende voraussah, leistete bereits geschichtspessimistischen Betrachtungen Vorschub. Und auf sakralem Gebiet geben die altaztekischen Gesänge eine Überfülle von Zeugnissen für das Thema des erdenfernen Hochgottes, der sich nicht mehr um Menschen und irdische Geschicke kümmert. Wenn derartige Anschauungen durch die Katastrophe des Verlustes der staatlichen und geistigen Eigenständigkeit der Azteken eine absolute Steigerung erfuhren, so fragt es sich, ob diese Skepsis gegenüber der geschichtlichen und religiösen Tradition, der „Wahrheit" der alten Zeit mithin, endgültig war.

Es ist bekannt, dass sich allmählich an den von den Spaniern durch christliche Kathedralen überhöhten Heiligtümern Altmexikos die vor ihrer missionarischen Umwandlung lebendigen Formen des Kults und der mit ihm verbundenen Glaubensvorstellungen wieder in einer Weise durchsetzten, die dazu geführt hat, von synkretistischen Bildungen, von einer mexikanischen „Mischreligion" zu sprechen [36]). Wichtiger aber als die mehr oder weniger verdeckte Wiederkehr heidnischer Kulte und Gottheiten ist der Rückgriff auf einen diese Entwicklung erst ermöglichenden zentralen Begriff, der zum Ausdruck kommt in der Blickrichtung auf Ruhm und Ehre der vorspanischen Zeit. Es ist das Prinzip *tlamanitiliztli*, der Tradition und Wahrheit der alten Zeit, dem sich das Mexiko der nachaztekischen Periode sukzessive wieder zuwandte. Damit wird deutlich, dass gegenüber der Skepsis der von der Conquista unmittelbar erfassten Generation jenes Urteil späterer Geschlechter zutreffender war, das im 17. Jahrhundert der aztekische Historiker Chimalpahin in die Worte fasste [37]):

---

34) Lehmann, Sterbende Götter, S. 102.

35) Vgl. u.a. *Walter Krickeberg*, Altmexikanische Kulturen, Berlin 1956, S. 186 f.

36) Vgl. Robert Ricard, La "conquête spirituelle" du Mexique, Paris 1933, S. 324.

37) Walter Lehmann und Gerdt Kutscher, Das Memorial breve acerca de la fundacion de la ciudad de Culhuacan von *Domingo de San Anton Muñon Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuatzin* (Quellenwerke zur alten Geschichte Amerikas, Bd. 7), Stuttgart 1958, S. 112.

„yehuatl totenyo yez:
çan yn quexquichcauh maniz cemanahuatl
ayc pollihuiz
yn itenyo yn itauhca in mexico Tenuchtitlan —
Dies wird unser Ruhm sein:
Solange die Welt bestehen wird,
soll niemals vergehen
der Ruhm, die Ehre von Mexiko Tenochtitlan."

GNOSIS ALS WELTRELIGION UND ALS HÄRESIE

(Vorgetragen an der Tagung „Häresien und Schismen" in Berlin, 15.11.1966)

VON

PETR POKORNÝ

Prag

I.A) Die Gnosis ist mit dem ambitiösen Programm entstanden, eine Weltreligion zu werden und hat sich dann in eine christliche Häresie umgewandelt.

Diese These soll erklärt und begründet werden.

Dass die Gnosis ausserhalb des Christentums entstanden ist, wird vor allem durch die Tatsache belegt, dass es eine Reihe gnostischer Texte gibt, die keine christlichen Motive aufweisen oder in welchen diese als spätere Einschübe zu bezeichnen sind. Ausser den älteren Traktaten der hermetischen Gnosis gilt das für die simonianische Grosse Apophasis, für das Apokryphon des Johannes, für die Epistel des Eugnostos (CG III), für die sogenannte Naassenerpredigt (Hipp. Phil. V, 7-9) u.a. [1]).

Das zweite Argument für die ausserchristliche Entstehung der Gnosis ist die Tatsache, dass der gnostische Erlöser in den meisten christlich-gnostischen Texten nur selten und am Rande mit Jesus Christus identifiziert wird.

Die Gnosis ist also unabhängig von dem Christentum entstanden [2]).

B) Wie ist sie entstanden? C. Colpe hat in seiner Arbeit ‚Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule' (1961) gezeigt, dass die von der religionsgeschichtlichen Schule vorausgesetzten Mythen aus Ägypten und aus Iran für die Gnosis nicht konstitutiv sind und dass der gnostische Anthropos keine Forsetzung eines alten Mythus darstellt.

Die ausserchristlichen Anfänge der Gnosis wird man deshalb in

---

1) „Belege und eine breitere Begründung dieser These in meinem Aufsatz Der Ursprung der Gnosis", *Kairos* IX/1967, 94-105.

2) Vgl. K. Rudolph, *Stand und Aufgaben in der Erforschung des Gnostizismus, Tagung für allgem. Religionsgeschichte* — Jena, 1963, S. 97.

eine viel jüngere, höchstwahrscheinlich späthellenistische Zeit legen müssen. Die Gnosis erscheint dann als eine dem entstehenden Christentum konkurrierende Bewegung.

Trotzdem war es jedoch gut, dass die meisten Forscher der religionsgeschichtlichen Schule die Systeme mit der männlichen Erlösergestalt für ursprünglicher als diejenigen mit Sofia, Dynamis oder Eunoia hielten. In den meisten Sophia-Systemen kommt nämlich auch der Anthropos vor [3]) und man kann innerhalb ihnen sogar Versionen entdecken, in denen Anthropos in der Mitte stand [4]). Die meisten Dokumente der ausserchristlichen Gnosis gehören auch wirklich in die Gruppe mit einem männlichen Erlöser.

Bedeutend ist auch, dass die „männlichen" Systeme fast alle eindeutig über den mannweiblichen Charakter der zentralen Gestalt sprechen. [5]) Die Abschnitte aus den nicht ausgesprochen „männlichen" Systemen, in welchen über die innere Trennung der ursprünlich mannweiblichen höchsten Gottheit berichtet wird, deuten dann an, auf welche Weise die „weiblichen Systeme" entstanden sind. [6])

Die mannweibliche göttliche Gestalt mit betonten männlichen Zügen stand also in der Mitte der vorausgesetzten ursprünglichen gnostischen mythischen Spekulation.

C) H.-M. Schenke hat nachgewiesen, dass der Anlass zur Entstehung dieser Spekulation eine allegorische Auslegung von Gen. 1, 26f. geliefert hat. [7]) Man hat dabei auch an einige Motive der älteren Adam-Spekulationen des Diasporajudentums und tw. auch der Qumransekte angeknüpft, in welchen Adam als eine unschuldige und fast göttliche Gestalt verehrt wird. [8]) In der Gnosis ist jedoch dieses heterodox-jüdische Erbe zur Hervorhebung einiger spezifisch heid-

---

3) Siehe H.-M. Schenke, *Der Gott „Mensch" in der Gnosis,* 1962, S. 33.

4) Z.B. Das Wesen der Archonten — *CG* II, 91 = *Lab.* 139,2 oder die von Clemens Alex. dargebotene Version des Valentinianismus — *Strom.* II, 36, 2-4 vgl. Iren. *Adv.haer.* I, 5.5.

5) Die Naassenerpredigt — Hipp. Phil. V, 8, 4; *Corp. Herm.* I, 9 u.15; die Peraten Hipp. Phil. V, 14.3, Das Apokryphon des Johannes — *BG* 27, 17ff.

6) Z.B. Epist. Eugnost. *CG* I, 77 nach J. Doresse, *Vig. Chr.* II/1948 S. 142ff., Apof. Megal. — Hipp. Phil. V, 18, 2-7.

7) Op. cit. S. 70f.

8) Z.B. 2 Hen. A 31,6 vgl. E. Peterson, „La libération d'Adam de l'ANAGKE", *Rev. Bibl.* 55/1948, S. 199ff. Aus der gnostischen Seite siehe z.B. Die titellose Schrift-*CG* II (Böhlig) 156, 20ff.

nischen Gedanken benutzt. Es handelt sich um den Gedanken der Wesensgleichheit der Menschen und Göttern, der ihren ursprünglichen Ausdruck in den chthonischen Kulten und vegetativen Mythen gefunden hat. [9])

Bei dem archetypischen mythischen Geschehen trat oft die mütterliche Gottheit in den Vordergrund, die die unmittelbare Lebensbezogenheit des ganzen Kults darstellte. Dieser war auch für das Erlebnis des Sinnes des individuellen Lebens von Bedeutung. Dieses Element hat das Leben der Gesellschaft nicht nur konsolidiert, sondern auch verlangsamt, sodass von Zeit zur Zeit eine Spannung zwischen Wirklichkeit und Mythus entstand. Diese Krisis ist in der hellenistischen Zeit universal geworden. Sie wurde im römischen Hellenismus durch die politische und kommunikatorische Vereinigung des Mittelmeerraumes und vor allem durch die Differenzierung der Gesellschaft gesteigert. Die einzelnen Kulte verloren ihre konkrete Tragweite. Die Versuche, diese Krisis durch mehrere parallele Einweihungen oder durch die Vereiniging mehrer Gottheiten zu lösen, waren prinzipiell inkonsequent.

Diese geistige Zentralfrage versuchte die Gnosis durch die Einführung einer unsichtbaren höchsten Gottheit zu lösen, die zwar keine Beziehung zum konkreten Leben hatte, die jedoch, weil sie so spiritualisiert war, verschiedene Menschen vereinigen und ihnen die Wesensgleichheit mit der Gottheit zusprechen konnte. Die spiritualistische Einstellung wurde auch durch die Hervorhebung des männlichen Prinzips betont, der das Obere darstellte.

D) Die gnostischen Denker haben an die anziehungsvolle Idee des unsichtbaren jüdischen Gottes und an die platonische Philosophie angeknüpft. Dabei haben sie einen umwälzenden Schritt gewagt. Sie haben das konkrete Sein — die Schöpfung — und den Schöpfergott von dem transzendenten höchsten Gott getrennt. Der konkrete Mensch wurde mit dem mannweiblichen höchsten Gott auf Grund der Spekulationen für wesensgleich und deshalb potenziell göttlich erklärt. Das Entscheidende war die mystische Erkenntnis gnōsis dieses Tatbestandes.

---

9) U. Bianchi, „Le Problème des origines du gnosticisme", in: *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo,* Studies in the History of Religions, Suppl. to Numen XII, 1967, S. 1-27, bes. S. 9.

Die Gnosis hat deshalb die Teilnahme an den traditionellen Kulten nicht ausgeschlossen. Sie hat in ihrem überwiegend durch das Wort getragenen Kult [10]) eine höhere integrierende Deutung einzelner Kultmythen dargeboten. Weil dabei platonische Gedanken eine grosse Rolle spielten und weil diese Umdeutung nur auf Grund der allegorischen Methode durchführbar war, ist vorauszusetzen, dass die ersten gnostischen Spekulationen im alexandrinischen Bereiche entstanden sind.

Es war jedoch nicht unmittelbar in dem philonischen Bereich. Philo war nicht so dualistisch wie die Gnosis und nie hat er das Gesetz abgelehnt. Er hat sogar gegen die synkretistischen und antinomistischen Gruppen seiner Umgebung polemisiert.[11]) In diesen wird man die Anfänge der Gnosis suchen müssen.

Der tiefe gnostische Dualismus bedeutete eine Antwort auf die Krisis des Späthellenismus. Sein Auftauchen, das die mehr oder weniger deutliche Ablenung des Schöpfers bedeutet, ist einer der ersten Charakterzüge der Gnosis.

E) Auf diese Weise hat man theoretische Voraussetzungen zur Bildung einer synkretistischen Weltreligion gebildet. Die durch die Naassenerpredigt und durch Poimandres bezeugte Verbreitung der gnostischen Anthropos-Spekulation und die Fähigkeit verschiedene religiöse Traditionen als Sprungbrett für die Entwicklung eigener Lehren zu benutzen, belegen die These, dass die Gnosis ursprünglich die synkretistische Krisis lösen wollte. Sie ist nicht Weltreligion geworden und die bisher erwähnten Motive sind wirklich nur Ansätze zum solchen Programm. Es war mehr eine Interpretation als ein selbständiges System. Und doch hat man gerade dadurch eine neue Etappe erreicht. Der alte kultische Mythus wurde durch die gnostischen Spekulationen seiner unmittelbaren Verbindlichkeit entledigt. Die gnostische Spekulation war zwar mythisch, aber doch war sie wieder zu einer neuen Interpretation offen. Und grundsätzlich sollte sie nur den Weg zum individuellen Erlebnis geistiger Offenbarungen vorbereiten.

Die Gnosis hat die klassische Religion, in welcher der Mythus und der Kultus in direkter Verbindung stehen, aufgehoben.

---

10) Vgl. P. Pokorný, *Der Epheserbrief und die Gnosis,* 1965, S. 109ff.
11) Z.B. *De migr. Abr.* 89, *De spec. leg.* I, 131 vgl. 17.319f

F) Die entscheidende Lebenskraft hat der Gnosis der soteriologische Charakter ihrer Spekulation verliehen. Der gnostische Spiritualismus war keine blosse Lehre. Er wurde zur messianischen Verkündigung. Weil die Gnosis in einem heterodox-jüdischen Milieu entstand, ist zu folgern, dass die Gnosis den auf dem Kopf gestellten jüdischen geschichtlichen Messianismus darstellt.

Der Demiurg wird also nicht überall in der Gnosis diabolisiert.[12]) In Corp. Herm. I, 9-11 ist er z.B. eher dem platonischen Demiurg[13]) ähnlich.[14]) Erst die Herabsetzung der Schöpfung hat den Demiurg zum Widersacher Gottes gemacht.[15]) Die Gnosis verkündigt die Befreiung aus der demiurgischen Sphäre der Schicksalsmächte.

G) Diese Entwicklung wurde nicht in allen gnostischen Gruppen vollzogen und die antisemitischen Züge, wie die Verehrung der Schlange oder Kains tauchen nur ortsweise auf. Man kann in diesem Sinne nicht von einer Revolution sprechen.[16]) Das Anfangsstadium, in welchem sich die Gnosis wahrscheinlich aus Ägypten nach Syrien und Kleinasien verbreitet hat, ist also durch die Vorstellung eines rein geistigen Gottes „Mensch" gekennzeichnet, dessen andere Ich auf Erden eingekerkert ist. Mit ihm ist auch die Hoffnung auf die Befreiung aus der Macht der Schicksalsmächte verbunden.[17]) Die synkretistische Umdeutung des jüdischen Messianismus bedeutete einen geistigen Umbruch, aus welchem sich die antisemitischen Formen der Gnosis konsequent entwickelten. Auch dort wo der Demiurg nicht als böse betrachtet wurde, hat die Abwertung des gegenständlichen Seins zum kosmischen Dualismus geführt.[18])

---

12) Das behauptet H. Jonas, *Gnosis und spätaniker Geist* I, 1964³, S. 384. Siehe auch die antignostische Polemik von Plotin, *Ennead.* II, 9.

13) Timaios 74, 5ff. vgl. Numenius v. Apamea bei Euseb. *Praep. evang.* XI, 18, 14 u. 22-23.

14) C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks,* 1954², S. 142; P. Boyancé, „Dieu cosmique et dualisme", in *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo* (Anm. 9).

15) Ähnlich war es mit dem biblischen Satan, der noch im Alten Testament ein Diener Jahwes ist. In den bewahrten gnostischen Dokumenten überwiegt jedoch die dualistische Etappe. Der Diabolisierung des Demiurgs begegnet man auch in den bisher weniger bekannten Texten wie in der Apokalypse des Adam — *CG* V, 64 (58) und im Evang. Verit. *CJ* 17, 15ff.

16) L. Varcl, *Simon Magus,* 1949, S. 19 dagegen Jonas *op. cit.* S. 214ff.

17) Die Emanationssysteme halte ich in Unterschied zu Jonas *op. cit.* S. 330 für sekundär.

18) *Corp. herm.* I, 19 vgl. W. Bousset, *Die Hauptprobleme der Gnosis,* 1907,

Die Idee der Wesensgleichkeit mit der Gottheit, der Spiritualismus und der synkretistische Universalismus sind also die Hauptmerkmale der beginnenden Gnosis. Nirgendwo anders, auch nicht bei Philo oder im heterodoxen Judentum [19]) finden wir diese Motive so organisch verbunden wie in der ausserchristlichen gnostischen Schicht, besonders dort, wo der Gott „Mensch" (in zweierlei oder dreierlei Gestalt) auftaucht. Die Gnosis entsteht also dort, wo der hellenistische spiritualistische Synkretismus den jüdischen Messianismus und die Idee des unsichtbaren Gottes für sich in Anspruch nimmt. Auf der anderen Seite werden zur Gnosis diejenigen Strömungen der jüdischen Diaspora, in welchen die Hellenisierung so weit fortgeschritten ist, dass man die alttestamentliche Ausschliesslichkeit des Glaubens verlassen und ins Gegenteil verwandelt hat. Diese spezifische Entwicklung hat Ansätze zur Bildung einer Weltreligion geboren.

II. A) Trotzdem ist diese werdende Weltreligion gescheitert. Der erfolgreiche messianische Spiritualismus ist der Gnosis gleichzeitig zum Schicksal geworden. Er hat zu einer libertinistisch-asketischen Relativierung der menschlichen Beziehungen und deshalb auch zur Unterschätzung eigener Organisation geführt. Anfänglich haben die gnostischen Gruppen wahrscheinlich innerhalb der religiösen Thiasoi von Hypsistos oder Sabazios und in verschiedenen heterodox-jüdischen Gruppen ihre organisatorische Basis gefünden. [20]) Es war jedoch auf die längere Dauer nicht möglich, eine synkretistische Supra-Religion zu bilden die den Kern der einzelnen Kulte offenbart, ohne eine eigene vollkommenere Form zu finden. Die Gnosis war dessen innerlich nicht fähig. Wo sie eigene Gruppen bildete, hat sich bald ihre Schwäche gezeigt. Der XIII. Traktat des Corp. Herm. ist schon ein Zeugnis von der Auflösung jedes Kultes im individuellen Erlebnis, das die Lektüre diese Traktats erwecken soll.

B) Die Urmensch-Spekulation hält sich zwar eine lange Zeit bis in die christliche Epoche, [21]) aber sie wird kaum zum Rückgrat eines

S. 121. Tw. gilt es auch für die stark platonisierte Kore Kosmu, *Exc. Stob.* XIII, 24-25.

19) Belege bei K. Schubert, *Die Religion des nachbiblischen Judentums,* 1955, S. 94-97, ders. *ThLz* 78|1953, Sp. 494ff.

20) Pokorný, *op. cit.* S. 26ff. 109ff. 120. Über die kultischen Weckrufe S. 94f. 119f.

21) Z.B. *Mart. Petri* 9. Monoimos Hipp. Phil. VIII, 12-15 oder innerhalb des Systems der Sethianer Hipp. Phil. V, 19, 21.

grossen christlich-gnostischen Systems. Religionsphänomenologisch ist es verständlich. Die konsequente Abneigung von der Welt, die durch die Hervorhebung des männlichen Prinzips betont wurde, war nicht für eine längere Zeit haltbar. Bei den Gnostikern hat sie nämlich z.B. zum Verzicht auf die Zeugung von Kinder geführt.[22]) Deshalb hat die weibliche göttliche Gestalt die Oberhand gewonnen, die die Spannung zwischen Oben und Unten, geistig und irdisch mildert. Sie ist eine geistige Macht, die durch ihren Fehler doch für die Existenz dieser Welt mitverantwortlich ist, wie wir es entwickelt z.B. im Valentinismus oder in den Barbelo-gnostischen Systemen sehen.

Wie schon erwähnt, hat diese Entwicklung an die Vorstellung einer mannweiblichen höchsten Gottheit angeknüpft. Gleichzeitig wurde dadurch die jüdische Tradition der geistigen Hypostasen /rūaḥ, škīnā, ḥokmā/ aufgenommen. Die Einschaltung des weiblichen Mittlers hat zur Bildung grosser Systeme und zur Entwicklung des Emanationsprinzips geführt. Es zeigt sich, dass die ursprüngliche akosmische Einstellung eigentlich nur eine Larve war, unter welcher sich die Sehnsucht nach der Lösung diesseitiger Probleme barg. Das Weibliche erfüllt das Bedürfnis nach der Verwurzelung in einem allumfassenden mütterlichen Prinzip.

Nach dem anfänglichen spiritualistischen Umbruch erlebt die Gnosis einen fast gesetzmässigen geistigen Ausgleich.[23]) Eine indirekte Analogie zu dieser Entwicklung kann man in der Entstehung des marianischen Kults im Christentum sehen.

C) Die unterdrückte Sehnsucht nach einer konkreten Hoffnung war jedoch nicht nur durch die Hervorhebung des weiblichen Prinzips zu lösen. Es entstanden Persönlichkeiten, die sich für die Träger oder sogar für die Verkörperung gnostischer Prinzipen hielten. Das letztere war vor allem bei Simon aus Gitta der Fall.

Nach den Berichten von Apg. 8, 10, Iren. adv. haer. I, 23, 1.3, Just. Apol. 26, 3, Orig. Contr. Cels. VI, 11 und Euseb. Hist. eccl. 4, 22,5 ff. hat sich Simon für inkarnierte (göttliche) Kraft erklärt.[24])

---

22) Z.B. Thom. Evang. Log. 114 vgl. mit I. Tim. 4, 3.

23) Gegen G. Quispel, „Der gnostische Anthropos und die jüdische Tradition", *Eranos Jb.* 22/1953, 1954, S. 195ff.

24) Siehe auch Varcl *op. cit.* S. 97; E. Haenchen, „Gab es eine vorchristliche Gnosis?", *ZThK* 49/1952, S. 316ff = *Gott und Mensch,* 1965, 265ff., ders., „Die Apostelgeschichte", *Meyers Komment,* III, 1959[3], S. 256ff.; J. Doresse, *The*

Es handelt sich offensichtlich um die mannweibliche Gottheit, die in der späteren simonianischen Grossen Apophasis am Anfang des Emanationssystems steht. Simon hat also höchstwahrscheinlich die ältere anonyme Sepekulation über den mannweiblichen Gottmenschen kennengelernt, an welche später die christlichen Naassener und Ophiten angeknüpft haben. Ich habe schon erwähnt, dass sie eine Interpretation der bekannten Mythe darbot, wie es z.B. in der Naassenerpredigt zu sehen ist. [25]) Angesichts dieser Tatsache ist es kaum zutreffend in den Anfängen eine entweder philosophische oder mythologische Gnosis vorauszusetzen.

Simon aus Gitta hat auf die Messias-Ankündigung von Johannes dem Täufer geantwortet und sich für einen geistigen Erlöser erklärt. Er hat diese Rolle bis zu einem Versuch um die Himmelfahrt gespielt [26]) und sich für unsterblich gehalten. [27]) Auf diese Weise hat er die gnostische Spekulation, die er wahrscheinlich von Dositheos übernommen hat, mit der konkreten Geschichte verbunden und für alle sozialen Schichten anziehend gemacht. Der einheimischen Tradition der Verehrung der Kore nachfolgend [28]) hat er die weiblichen Züge der gnostischen höchsten Gottheit unterstrichen. Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass schon er selbst die Helene für die Verkörperung dieses weiblichen Prinzips der „algemeinen Seele" [29]) erklärte und dass die Apostelgeschichte darüber deshalb schweigt, weil Helene noch nicht zu einer anstössigen Gestalt geworden ist. Ihre Bezeichnung als Prostituierten stellt wahrscheinlich eine christliche Gegenlegende dar, die an ihre gnostische Identifizierung mit dem „verlorenen Schaf" (Hesek. 34, 11-20) anknüpft. Das Log. 107 des Thomasevangeliums ist ein Beleg dafür, dass die Gnostiker auch das synoptische Gleichnis

---

Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics, 1960, S. 17. 329ff; W. Foerster, „Die ‚ersten Gnostiker' Simon und Menander", in: *Le origino dello Gnosticismo* (Anm. 9).

25) Die Rekonstruction siehe bei R. Reitzenstein — H.-H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus,* 1926, S. 161ff. und in meiner Studie *Počátky gnose* — Gnostic Origins, 1968.

26) Ps. Clem. *Recogn.* III, 46.

27) Ps. Clem. *Hom.* II, 22, 4, *Recogn.* II, 7.

28) L.-H. Vincent, „Le culte d'Hélena à Samarie", *Rev-Bibl.* 45/1936, S. 221-232.

29) In der älteren Schicht findet man diesen Gedanken z.B. in der Naassenerpredigt — Hipp. Phil. V, 7, 10. Vgl. Doresse *op. cit.* S. 329ff.

über das verlorene Schaf für die Begründung ihres besonderen Werts benutzten. Es hat ursprünglich keine herabsetzende Bedeutung gehabt.

Von den Ansätzen in der messianischen mythischen Spekulation ausgehend hat Simon also einen wirklichen Versuch um eine Weltreligion zu stiften gemacht. Weil er jedoch die Versuchung der Selbstvergottung nicht, wie Jesus nach Matth. 4, 5-7 oder Paulus nach Apg. 14, überwunden hat, ist sein Versuch, eine Weltreligion zu bilden gescheitert.

III. A) Nun stehen wir schon vor der letzten Etappe in der Entwicklung der Gnosis. Am Beginn des 2. Jahrhunderts haben sich die meisten gnostischen Gruppen mit dem Christentum verbunden. Es gilt vor allem für die Naassener, Ophiten und für Anhänger des Gnostikers Justin. Ihre Werke kennen wir überwiegend in einer christlichen Bearbeitung.

Die Christianisierung war jedoch kein einfacher Prozess. Ursprünglich versuchten wahrscheinlich die Gnostiker das Christentum, ähnlich wie die anderen Religionen auf „höherer" Ebene zu interpretieren und Jesus in die Gallerie der lokalgebundenen Metamorphosen der höchsten Gottheit einzureihen. Es war also keine Konkurrenz, sonder eher ein Versuch das Christentum zu überschatten.

Die christliche Antwort war deshalb anfänglich noch nicht dogmatisch eingestellt. Sie bestand in der Hervorhebung der höchsten, souveränen und ausschliesslichen Stellung von Jesus in der himmlischen Welt und der Bedeutung des Evangeliums für die Zukunft und für die konkreten menschlichen Beziehungen. Auch die Auffassung der christlichen Gemeinden als einer Christus gehörenden Kirche (ekklēsia) entstand wahrscheinlich in dieser ersten Begegnung mit der Gnosis. Mit dieser Etappe der Gnosis wird vermutlich schon im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief ein Gespräch geführt. [30])

B) Das Christentum, das äusserlich durch die Begrenzung des Kultus der Gnosis nahe stand, hat also bei allem Universalismus in der Verkündigung die jüdische Ausschliesslichkeit des Glaubens erhalten und dadurch die Gnosis als eine Gefahr entdeckt.

Die meisten Gnostiker haben sich dan für Christen erklärt. Gegen solche Gnostiker polemisiert z.B. der neutestamentliche 1. Brief an

30) Pokorný, *op. cit.*

Timotheus. In der Zeit, in welcher die kirchliche Lehre in ihren Anfängen stand, haben viele Gemeinden die Gnostiker aufgenommen. Diese haben dann die Kirche beeeinflusst, aber nicht von aussen bedroht. Die schweren Folgen dieser zersetzenden gnostischen Anpassungsfähigkeit werden im Christentum noch heute schwer gefühlt.

C) Anders war es dort, wo die christlich-gnostischen Gruppen schon in den Anfängen als Häretiker isoliert wurden. Dort ist es zu einer Konkurrenz gekommen, in welcher die Christen die gnostischen Vorstellungen übernahmen, wo sie sich jedoch gerade in der Polemik der ganzen Struktur des an Jesus gebundenen Inkarnationsglaubens besser bewusst geworden sind. Die Devise „Nur der Geist ist von Gott, der bekennt, dass Jesus Christus im Fleisch gekommen ist", die wir in einer sonst so spiritualistisch geprägten Schrift, wie der 1. Johannsebrief ist, lesen, ist ein gutes Zeugnis dafür. Die Theologie als Reflexion des Glaubens hat sich nicht nur im Gespräch mit der Synagoge, sondern auch in der Polemik mit der Gnosis entwickelt. Jedenfalls versuchten auch die als Häretiker betrachteten Gnostiker auf die christliche Rechnung zu leben und betrachteten sich als wahre Christen.

D) Die bedeutendsten gnostischen Gruppen entstehen schon unter Führung ausgeprägter christlicher Persönlichkeiten, die als Lehrer besondere Autorität besitzen. Die Gestalt von Jesus spielt in ihrer Lehre schon eine grosse Rolle. Das gilt sowohl für Basilides als auch für Valentinus und den Valentinismus.

Aus der tieferen Interpretation einer Reihe von Religionen wird nun nur ein scheinbar tieferes Christentum. Die konkrete Eschatologie wird in ihm durch den Doketismus verdrängt und Jesus, der in der Kirche durch die Überlieferung seiner Sprüche und der Passionsgeschichte eine potenzielle hermeneutische Norm der Christusverkündigung blieb, ist zur blossen geistigen Hypostase geworden. Dadurch wurde der Weg zurück in die lebendigen Ströme des Christentum endgültig gesperrt.

Doch wagt die Gnosis nicht, Jesus mit dem geistigen Ich des Gnostikers zu identifizieren. Bei Basilides ist er z.B. ein Offenbarer und Gegenspieler des Schöpfergottes.

Auch diese Spannung wurde jedoch in der Nahe der Kirche peinlich gefunden und bei Valentinus spielt der Demiurg schon eine mehr

neutrale Rolle. In der ptolemäischen Fassung bekehrt sich der Demiurg schon, ähnlich wie ein Psychiker.[31]) Auf diese Weise verwischt die Gnosis ihre kompromittierenden synkretistischen Anfänge. Ein ausgeprägtes Zeugnis dieser Abgrenzung gegen die heidnischen Anfänge ist das Evangelium Veritatis mit den Oden Salomos, die den gnostischen Akosmismus um den Preis der Verwerfung des Synkretismus und der Emanationssysteme bewahren. [32])

Soziologisch hat die christliche Gnosis den Boden der kultischen Vereine verlassen und eigene Organisation nach dem Vorbild der Kirche gebaut. Auch das kultische Leben wird äusserlich dem christlichen angepasst. Epiphanius berichtet in Haer.26,4-5 über die ärgerlichen kultischen Mahle der Phibioniten, die in ihrer äusseren Struktur an das christliche Abendmahl erinnern.

E) Von der heidnischen Seite wurden dann gegen das wachsende Christentum trotz ihrer lokalen Gebundenheit die Mysterien eingesetzt. Das Christentum hat sich aber von seinem Kern her als fähiger erwiesen, nicht nur eine weltumfassende Organisation zu schaffen, sondern auch die elementaren menschlichen Beziehungen zu stärken und trotz der späteren machtpolitischen Verzerrung auch neue Impulse aufzunehmen.

Die Gnosis hat dem Kampf verloren. Und doch hat sie die kirchliche Lehre tief beeinflusst, in welcher die doketischen Motive bis heute eine bedeutende Rolle spielen. Der Weg der Gnosis hat also von einer synkretistisch eingestellten mythischen Spekulation über die Ansätze zur Weltreligion mit historischen Gründern und über eine christlich Häresie zur immanenten Versuchung innerhalb des Christentums geführt.

Die zahlreichen phänomenologischen Analogien aus verschiedenen Zeiten und Kulturen zeigen, dass diese Gefahr nicht nur dem Christentum droht. Es ist die Gefahr, die Entfremdung, die der Druck der äusseren Bedingungen und der überlebten geistigen Traditionen er-

---

31) H.-M. Schenke, *Die Gnosis, in Umwelt des Urchristentums,* 1965, S. 394. Vgl. das Motiv der Reue des Sebaoth, des Sohns des Demiurgs — Das Wesen der Archonten *CG* II 95 = *Lab.* 143, 13ff.

32) Vgl. H.-M. Schenke, *Die Herkunft des sog. Evangelium veritatis,* 1958, P. Pokorný, „Das sog. Evang. verit. und die Anfänge des christlichen Dogmas", *Listy filologické* 87/1964, S. 51ff.

weckt, durch die Flucht aus der Geschichte, also durch eine tiefere Entfremdung, zu überwinden.

Deshalb muss die Gnosis als eine gefährliche Strömung bezeichnet werden, auch wenn sie die alte Religion erschüttert und in den Kult die philosophische Problematik eingeführt hat.

RELIGIOUS CONFRONTATION, A CASE STUDY: THE 1893 PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

BY

DONALD H. BISHOP

Washington State University

One of the questions a historian of religion asks is what happens when religions confront each other in a historical situation. What attitudes develop? What are they based on? What actions flow from them? The World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 is a case in point for, as Dr. D. J. Burrell, a delegate from New York pointed out, "Never before has Christianity been brought into such close, open and decisive contact with other religions of the world." [1])

The Parliament is a classical example of the attitudes a follower of one religion may take when he is confronted by other faiths. Three emerged at Chicago; they may be called exclusion, inclusion and pluralism. Exclusion is the attitude that there is only one true religion which is destined to become universal. It was the attitude or view expressed most often at the Congress; supporters of the assertion that "Christianity is to conquer and supplant all the other religions of the world... and this Parliament is one of the steps toward this ultimate triumph," [2]) were many. Two types of Christian exclusionists were present. One was those who believed Christianity was the sole possessor of truth and goodness and there was no verity or good whatsoever in any other religions. Professor Wilkinson of Chicago exemplified that view by his comment on the "erring religions of mankind."

> Those religions the Bible nowhere represents as pathetic and partly successful gropings after God. They are one and all represented as groping downward, not groping upward. According to the Christian they hinder, they do not help. Their adherents' hold on them is like the blind grasping of drowning men on roots or rocks, that only tend to keep them to the bottom of the river. [3])

---

1) Professor Walter R. Houghton, Editor-in-Chief. *Neely's History of The Parliament of Religions and Religious Congresses.* Chicago. 1894, p. 675.

2) American Advocate of Peace, Oct. 1893, p. 229.

3) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 764.

The second type of exclusionist was the "good-but" one which admitted some veracity and merit in other religions but believed Christianity to have the greater truth and virtue. Reverend Dennis of New York declared

> Its message is much more than Judaism; it is infinitely more than the revelation of nature; it is even more than best teachings of all other religions combined, for whatever is good and true in other religious systems is found in full and authoritative form in Christianity. [4])

Reverend Gordon, a missionary from Kyoto, in discussing Christianity in Japan, stated, "Despite all that might be said in its favor, and that is much, Buddhism possesses characteristics which clearly indicate it is not to be the final or permanent religion of Japan or any other country." [5]) The "good-but" attitude was espoused by Reverend Scott of St. Louis also in his statement, "While admitting much that is good in the best books of the ethnic religions, there is a transcendent superiority in the Bible over them, that in a unique sense constitutes it the oracle of God" [6]), and in Professor Valentine's remarks that

> The other historic faiths have grasped some of the great essential elements of theistic truth. We rejoice to trace and recognize them. But they all shine forth in Christian revelation. The other theistic beliefs have no elements of true theistic conception to give Christianity what it has not but Christianity has much to give others. It unites and consummates out of its own given light all the theistic truth that has been sought and seen in partial vision by sincere souls along the ages and around the world. [7])

Christian exclusionists presented a number of arguments for the superiority and final triumph of Christianity. One was that other religions are topographical and of one type while Christianity is universal and all-inclusive. "All other religious systems prior to the advent of Christ were national like Judaism, or state religions like Paganism. The Catholic religion alone is world-wide and cosmopolitan, embracing all races and nations, and people and tongues," [8]) asserted Cardinal Gibbon. Similarly Dr. Boardman of Philadelphia declared

---

4) Rev. John Henry Barrows. *The World's Parliament of Religions.* Chicago. 1893, p. 1252.
5) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 1293.
6) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 924.
7) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 289.
8) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

> All other religions, comparatively speaking, are more or less topographical. There was the institute religion of Palestine, the priest religion of Egypt, the hero religion of Greece, the empire religion of Rome, the ancestor religion of China, the Vedic religion of India, the Shinto religion of Japan ... But Christianity is the religion of mankind. Zoroaster was a Persian; Mohammed was an Arabian. But Jesus is the Son of Man. [9])

A second argument posed by Protestant and Catholic alike was that there have been a number of revelations in man's history and that God's revelation in Christ was the culmination of earlier ones, and of the revelation process itself. In a speech called "The Invincible Christ," Reverend Pentecost from London asserted "Christ incarnate, crucified and raised from the dead two thousand years ago was only the culmination in time, and to our sense, of a revelation already ages old." [10]) Combined with this was the historical preparation thesis that other religions were but a preparation for or led up to the final one Christianity. "Christianity is the supreme religion, but it has had a historical preparation with contributions from the great ethnic religions," the Reverend Scott asserted. [11]) The Rt. Reverend Keane of Washington supported him in a longer statement—

> The Parliament has shown that all the attempts of the tribes of the earth to recall and set forth God's teaching, all heir endeavors to tell of the means provided by Almighty God for uniting man with himself, logically and historically lead up to and culminate in Jesus Christ. We have seen that all the great religious leaders of the world declared themselves gropers in the dark, pointing on toward the fullness of the light, or conscious precursors and prophets of him who was to be the Light of the World. We have seen that whatever in their teaching is true and beautiful and good is but the foretaste of the fullness of the true, the beautiful and the good to be bestowed in him. [12])

---

9) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 842.

10) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 1167.

11) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 924.

12) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 1334. In his book which was widely read, *A History of the Christian Church,* Professor Williston Walker accepted that thesis—"However simple the beginnings of Christianity may have been, Christianity must possess, or take on, all these traits if it was to conquer the Roman Empire or to become a world religion. It came 'in the fulness of time' in a much larger sense than was formerly thought; and no one who believes in an overruling providence of God will deny the fundamental importance of this mighty preparation, even if some of the features of Christianity's early development bear the stamp and limitations of the time and have to be separated from the eternal." p. 11, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1918.

Exclusionism was supported also by a socio-cultural argument of which Dr. D. J. Burrell was a staunch proponent. "The Christian religion makes an exclusive claim. It is not first among equals, but the only one," he asserted. "How shall the validity of that truth be demonstrated?" he asked. "By its influence upon individual and national character. The world will ultimately believe in the religion that produces the highest type of government and the best average man... By their fruits ye shall know them," was his reply. In the rest of his speech he made such declarations as "The people of America are a distinct people... The jurisprudence of America is essentially biblical, ... Our citizens are free men." [13]) Paraphrasing those statements and putting them in syllogestic form we have the following. American civilization is the most advanced, the American citizen the most civilized. Christianity is the religion of America; therefore Chrstianity is superior.

The fourth argument for the exclusionist view was that only Christianity is destined to recapture the original religious unity of the human race. Professor Meiner's statement to that effect consisted of four postulates. One—"As there was originally but one human family, so there was but one primitive religion"; two—as mankind multiplied and separated into tribes "men became estranged and the primitive religious union was broken up into a great number of religious forms"; three—"Mankind under the guidance of Providence is nowdays becoming daily more united again. The union of mankind will be fitly crowned by religious unity"; four—"as his guiding hand has led order and harmony out of the discordant conflicting elements of the universe and has made a cosmos out of chaos... so we look upon the religion of Christ as the one evidently predestined from the very dawn of human history to become, under the guiding hand of Providence, the religion which will ultimately reunite the entire human family." He also used another approach which was to assert the superiority of revelation as an epistemological method and then deduce the superiority of Christianity from it. "Frail human reason has proved itself throughout human history as utterly incompetent to produce any religion which can satisfy mankind," [14]) he asserted. Christianity more

13) Houghton, *op. cit.*, pp. 676-682.
14) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 1266.

than any other religion is based on revelation rather than reason. Therefore the only valid conclusion one can draw is that Christianity is the superior religion.

While several other arguments for exclusionism were given only three will be noted. The first was Professor Valentine's. He began with the assertion that only a religion which is "rooted in faith in a personal God," in the truth "that the maker of all is a thinker and both knows and wills" can satisfy human beings. "Yet the personality of God has often been much obscured in the historic faiths," he went on. Hinduism, Confucianism, Parseeism are "substantially pantheistic, reducing God to impersonal existence or the conscious factors and forces of cosmic order." [15]) They cannot appeal to human feelings, needs and longings as does Christianity with its central belief in a personal God. They are, therefore, inferior religions over which Christianity will ultimately triumph. The next argument was based on the theme of the fall, namely that the earlier religions once had the truth but had lost or perverted it. Rerevend Scott represented that view in his statement —

> Doubtless divine wisdom did the most possible in giving them light, and the outcome, as far as wrong, has been a perversion of truth. It is a notable fact that there has been a deterioration in the sacred books of the ethnic religions, and not, as in the case of the Hebrew, an evolution toward greater light and truth. [16])

What was true of the Hebrew was even more true of Christianity, since it followed and superseded Judaism. A final example is the argument of Dr. Gracey's of Rochester, New York, that Christianity is more inclusive and will become the universal religion as other religions are displaced or assimilated by it. He asserted that "Ethnic religions are controlled by the character of the nations holding them" and are "limited by the laws which limit the races among which they are found"; that "in this age men are eager in their search after universal principles in all departments of human thinking"; that "the religion which contains within itself the largest number of these great root-thoughts of the world's faiths has a huge chance of becoming the religion of the world"; that

---

15) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
16) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 925.

> It is impossible to discover in all the intervening history of the race since Jesus Christ the appearance of a new religious idea. Christianity has the thought of the Godhead, ... All the other great items of the faiths of the world are not only present, but coordinated, correlated, and logically presented as a whole. Jesus Christ not only restated all that men ever held to be good but ... His logical order of religious thought and his high spiritualization of ethics have not been substituted, displaced, nor supplemented ...

"and that therefore Christianity" is to become the religion of men "since it contains the largest number of those great "root-thoughts". [17])

The second view which emerged at the 1893 Parliament of Religions was inclusionism. The inclusionist believes that there is but one true religion. It is not, however, one of those already in existence, but is one which will evolve in the future. It might be a synthesis of that which is best or unique in each existing religion or it might consist of the basic elements religions have in common.

The inclusionists offered several basic arguments for this view. All religions have the same enemies—greed, war, materialism, indifference, sensualism—and they could be fought more effectively through concerted effort. All religions have the same ends or goals too, the uniting of man with God, the realizing of the divinity in the individual, the creating of a better world. All religions begin with the same human needs and aspirations, consolation in times of stress, faith in moments of fear, the hope of life after death. Inclusionists emphasized especially the similarity of ethical principles and the belief in one God found in all religions which would be the cornerstone for the new religion. The Jewish liberal from Chicago, Dr. Hirsch, declared "God is the God of the universe" who "speaks to all mankind," [18]) and Professor Carpenter of Oxford in his speech at the Parliament said,

> More than five hundred years before Christ, the Chinese sage, Lao-tze, bade his disciples recompense injury with kindness; and at the same great era, faithful in noble utterance, Gotoma, the Buddha, said, 'Let man over come anger by liberality, and the liar by truth.' Is this less a revelation of a higher ideal than the injunction of Jesus, 'Resist not evil, but whosoever smiteth on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also? [19])

Proponents of this view thought of religion as deed not creed. "The love of man is the essence of the religion," asserted Reverend Moneris

---

17) Barrows, *op. cit.*, pp. 1329-1330.
18) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 1304.
19) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 894.

of London.[20]) "The potential religious life is not a creed but character," said the Quaker Powell from New York.[21]) Adherents of inclusion such as Merwin Snell pointed out that true religion is not "local and provincial in its nature"[22]) but is universal in scope and purpose. Its purpose is to unite and not divide mankind. In the past religions have divided men because they have been national religions but, as Dr. Hirsch asserted, "the day of national religions is past... Race and nationality cannot circumscribe the fellowship of the larger communion of the faithful, a communion destined to embrace in one covenant all the children of men."[23]) What is needed now is a single religion which "will teach the solidarity of the race that all must rise or fall as one" and which will unite men in a universal brotherhood.[24])

One of the main emphases of the inclusionists was the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

> God is the one Eternal and Infinite, the Inspirer of all human kind... He is the God of all religions, of all denominations, of all lands and of all Scriptures, and our progress lies in harmonizing these various systems, these various prophecies and developments into one great system.

P. C. Mozomdar told the Parliament.[25]) The inclusionits viewed man as a child of God first and a Christian or Jew next just as he is a citizen of the world first and then a member of a particular nation.[26])

---

20) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 627. Dharmapala also asserted the same point in a very trenchant statement in his closing speech, "Learn to think without prejudice, to love all beings for love's sake, to express your convictions fearlessly, to lead a life of purity, and the sunlight of truth will ilumine you. If theology and dogma stand in your way in the search of truth, put them aside. Be earnest and work out your own salvation with diligence and the fruits of holiness will be yours." p. 993 Hanson.

21) Houghton, *Ibid.*

22) Barrows, *op.cit.*, p. 1326.

23) Barrows, *op.cit.*, p. 1304.

24) Barrows, *op. cit.*, p. 1235.

25) Savage, p. 235. Nargarkar used an interesting figure of speech when making the same point. — "Let us realize that God is our mother, the mother of mankind, irrespective of the country or the cline in which men and women may be born. The deeper the realization of the motherhood of God, the greater will be the strength and intensity of our ideas of the brotherhood of man and the sisterhood of women." Savage, p. 228. Rev. Minot J. Savage, World's Congress of Religions. Boston, 1893.

26) The Reverend E. L. Rexford, a Universalist from Boston, represented that view when he said, "Back to the primal unity where man appears as a child of God before he is a Christian or Jew, Brahman or Buddhist, Mohammadan

They emphasized the basic similarities of men, their common nature and longings. They started with the view that religion is a universal phenomenon, that Truth is one, that it is the same for all rational beings and, as there is only one Truth and one God, there can be only one true religion. [27]) In his speech Shaku Soyen of Japan pointed out:

> We must not make any distinction between race and race, between civilization and civilization, between creed and creed, and faith and faith. You must not say, 'go away' because we are not Christians. You must not say 'go away' because we are yellow people. All beings on the universe are in the bosom of truth. We are all sisters and brothers, we are sons and daughters of truth, and let us understand one another much better and be true sons and daughters of truth.

One interesting argument offered by the inclusionists was an extension of one of the exclusionists'. If, as they pointed out, the religious history of man is the continual aggregation of smaller religious units into larger ones, why should this process stop with Christianity? For Christianity is but one of a number of existing units and the logical sequence is a culmination in a single world religion. As one religious journal pointed out, "the history of man is not Christo-centric, but cosmo-centric." [29]) Further, they declared, the spirit of the age is conducive to a universal religion. Many people are tired of the pettiness and provincialism of denominationalism and are searching for a more inclusive replacement. [30]) Religion also should not lag behind other areas of life. In politics the trend is toward an ultra-national political organization and religion must go in that direction too. Further, religion should be like science which is universal in scope,

---

or Parsee, Confusian, Taoist, or aught beside—back to this we must go if we are loyal to our kind." p. 242 Savage.

27) In his speech A. M. Powell of the New York Society of Friends said, "Every people on the face of the earth has some conception of the supreme and the infinite." (p. 627, Barrows) One commentator wrote, "The Parliament has called popular attention to the fact that the religious nature is inherent in man." The Parliament of Religions and the Christian Faith. Reverend D. S. Schaff. The Homiletic Review, XXVI (December, 1893).

28) Barrows, *op cit.*, p. 1285.

29) Free Religious Association of America. Proceedings at the 26th Annual meeting. Published by the F.R.A., Boston, 1894, p. 2.

30) In his address to the Parliament B. B. Nagarkar of India said "For the last several years there has been a ceaseless yearning, a deep longing after such a universal religion... The Present parliament of Religions is the clearest indication of that universal longing." Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

transcending all racial, national, and geographic bounds. Inclusionists ruled out any exclusive claim to truth and virtue by proponents of Christianity or any other particular religion. [31]) Nor would they accept the concept of a "chosen people." The Universalist Reverend E. L. Rexford was abhorred by those who would claim that "the common Father elects some and rejects others forgets some and remembers others in the sense of finality..." [32])

Pluralism was the third view or attitude which emerged at the Parliament. It holds that the ideal state is one in which the various religions live side by side or coexist in friendship, harmony, and peace. Only then will mankind have risen to the level of true religion. Pluralists rejected any exclusive claims for superiority or merit by Christianity or any other religion. For one reason man is fallible; he cannot know absolute truth. Thus no religion can make a claim for such. In his opening speech President Bonney declared that

> As the finite can never fully comprehend the infinite, nor perfectly express its on view of the divine, it necessarily follows that individual opinions of the divine nature and attributes will differ... Necessarily God reveals himself differently to a child than to a man, to a philosopher than to one who cannot read. Each must see God with the eyes of his own soul; each must behold him through the colored glass of his own nature; each must receive him according to his own capacity of reception. [33])

Bonney's plea for pluralism was based on both the limitations of human knowledge and individual variations in personality and temperament. Shibata Reiichi, the Shintoist from Japan, added a further note.

> As our doctrines teach us, all animate and inanimate things were born from one heavenly Deity, and everyone of them has its particular mission; so we ought to love them all and also to respect the various forms of religions in the world. They are all based, I believe, on the fundamental truth of religion. The difference between them is only in outward form, influenced by variety of history, the dispositions of the people and the physical conditions of the places where they originated. [34])

---

31) In the same speech Nagarkar said, "We believe that truth is born in time, but not in a place. No nation, no people, or no community has any exclusive monopoly on God's truth. It is a misnomer to speak of truth as Christian truth, Hindu truth, or Mohammedan truth." *Ibid.*

32) Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

33) Reverend Lewis P. Mercer. Review of the World's Religions Congresses. Chicago, 1893, p. 22.

34) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

One of the major arguments of the pluralists was that the differences between religions are mainly in externals. "It is altogether natural and proper," said A. M. Powell of the New York City Society of Friends, "that in form and method and ritual there should be diversity, great diversity among the peoples interested in religion throughout the world." [35]) Such external differences are not fundamental, he continued. They are no cause for conflict and attempts at conquest. In their essentials religions are alike, as they hold to a belief in a Supreme Being, in the divinity in man, and a common ethical creed. Adherents of pluralism argued that God has manifested himself to man in more ways than one and the fact of different religions demonstrates this. In his closing address the Reverend Barrows said, "Men of Asia and Europe, we have been made glad by your coming and have been made wiser... We have learned that truth is large and that there are more ways than one in God's providence by which men emerge out of darkness into heavenly light." [36]) The pluralists maintained that the God-man relationship takes many forms, that "God has not left himself without witness" in any land, and that all religions lead to the same end, God, as seen in the popular Japanese ode cited by K. R. M. Harai, "Though there are many roads at the foot of the mountains, yet if the top is reached the same moon is seen." [37]) The conclusion drawn by the pluralists was that there is truth in every religion and that no one religion has all the truth. We ought then, they declared, be less hasty about favoring our own and passing judgment on others. We ought to be more impartial, Dvivedi urged, when he said,

> Everyone has a natural inclination toward his native land and language, and particularly toward the religion in which he is brought up. It however, behooves men of impartial judgment to look upon all religions as so many different explanations of the dealings of the Supreme with men of varying culture and nationality. [38])

For the pluralist, religion was in part at least a matter of right attitudes—tolerance, charity, mutual respect. He who lacks these is not truly religious. To be such does not mean that one has no beliefs

---

35) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 622.
36) John W. Hanson, D.D., The World's Congress of Religions. Boston, 1894, p. 949.
37) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
38) Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

of his own, they pointed out. The principle of mutual exclusion does not apply here. One can have his own religious beliefs but he should not hold them as universally ultimate. He should grant others the same right to their own. Christianity should, in the words of one commentator, "take its place on a common platform with other religions, all of which are repectable, useful, and entitled to consideration." [39]) The pluralists' view was that there is good in each tradition and that we ought to encourage each believer to live up to the best in his own religion rather than attempting to convert him to our own. Each religion may have something unique—"Christianity declares the glory of God; Hinduism speaks about His infinite and eternal excellence; Mohammedanism proves the almightiness of His will; Buddhism says how joyful and peaceful he is," said P. C. Mozoomdar of India, but uniqueness is no grounds for universal superiority and ascension. [40]) Rather it is simply the contribution that a particular religion makes to the religious consciousness of the world. The different religions of the world should be seen not as opposing but complementing each other. Pluralists at the Parliament rejected the claim of the superiority of Christian ethics and insisted, as one example, that the "Golden Rule" is found in all religions. Christians do not live up to it any more than others, they insisted; and, if a religion is judged by its practical consequences, Christianity cannot claim superiority. To repudiate such a claim the Japanese delegate, Hirai, simply pointed out a number of injustices imposed upon his nation by western countries who call themselves Christian.

Three basic attitudes emerging at the Parliament of Religions in 1893 have been noted. The basis and action which followed from each now need to be considered. Since we are dealing primarily with Christianity and its response when confronted by other religions, the first question to ask is the philosophical basis of Christian exclusionism. On what grounds did a Christian such as the Reverend Morgan Dix assert that

> There is only one religion which has God's truth direct from Him; other religions are shadows or corruptions of it... There is One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all; one Mediator between God and men,

39) Morgan Dix, D.D., A Parliament of Religions, The Church Eclectic, XXI Jan. 1894, p. 899.

40) Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

> our Lord Jesus Christ... There is salvation in no other; for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. [41])

Christian exclusionism springs out of such presuppositions as the following. Religious knowledge is revealed knowledge. Ultimate truth is revealed truth. Revelation is superior to reason. Revealed knowledge is a more certain form of knowledge than rational knowledge. Religion is grounded in revelation. Religion begins with God not man; that is, religious systems evolve from an act of God and divine revelation, not from human thought and action. A particular religion begins with a particular revelation. God is personal being, not an abstract principle or a sum of the forces of the universe. His revelation, therefore, takes the form of a person, namely Christ. One revelation and one Saviour are sufficient; there is no need for more. Christ was divine and pure. He became sinful man's intercessor and the atonement for man's sin. A truth and a revelation, once given, is valid for all time. God's revelation of himself and his truth has been recorded by inspired recipients in scriptures which are then sacred and inerrant.

Christian exclusionism is based upon a metaphysical dualism. Reality consists of two orders, the natural and the supernatural, God and men, heaven and earth. The entities composing the duality are brought together through the person of Christ. He is the great unifier, the one through whom reconciliation between God and man occurs. Exclusionism takes a restrictive view of truth; that is, truth is incorporated in one book only; truth is fully incarnated in but one person; truth is known only to a few whether they be priest, clergy or a particular chosen group. The universal is mediated through the particular. Christian exclusionism buttresses its claim with miracle and mystery. Miracles as divine interventions in history or in nature, momentarily stopping the order of each, can and have taken place, that of Christ being the supreme one. Jesus was not only the result of God's miraculous action but performed miracles himself. Miracle is combined with mystery in that a miracle is an act or event beyond rational explanation, the verity of which must be accepted on faith.

The inclusionist, on the other hand, begins with a different set of presuppositions. Religious truth need not necessarily be revealed truth;

---

41) Dix of course disagreed with the commentator he quoted in the previous citation. The Church Eclectic, *op. cit.*, p. 890.

religion does not necessarily begin with God. Religious systems are human constructs. They evolve from human thought and action, not divine revelation. They are a result of the religious instinct in man and are a response to his aspirations and frustrations, the pleasures and horrors he experiences in life. Since all religions are of man, special preference or superiority cannot be given any one of them. The inclusionist has several reservations regarding revelation. If he accepts it, he views it as open-ended. God has not revealed himself just once but a number of times in the past and will continue to in the future. His revelation is not limited to one group but is universal. Nor is God's revelation mediated only by a person but, for example, through nature as well. The inclusionist sees no rational for the particularity of revelation. Further, the humanness of the recipients of revelation make infallibility impossible. Finally, he asks how one can resolve the competing, exclusive truth claims of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, each based on revelation and each claiming its revelation to be absolute and universal.

The inclusionist also has what might be called an "open" view of truth. This involves several postulates. Truth is acquired, not given. Man acquires religious as he does other kinds of truth. Truth has not been given once and for all time to man. It is not totally incorporated in a single person and event in human history. Rather man's religious history is an ancount of his constant search for truth and his slow, painful acquisition of it. Man's religious, as well as his other knowledge, has accumulated over the centuries and will continue to. Such an assertion is based on a process view of reality and a conception of religion or the religious life as a quest or search. It contrasts with a static view of reality which implies truth given as complete and for once and all time. An open view of truth implies that truth is equally accessible to all. God does not limit knowledge of himself to a particular people. As he is universal, so his truth is the universal and not the exclusive possession of any one person, group, class or nation.

The inclusionist's view is based on philosophical realism in the sense that truth is universal in scope. On that basis any religion which asserts exclusive truth claims would be repudiated. Inclusionism also presupposes a metaphysical monism. Reality is an integrated whole; it is harmonious or non-dialectical. Reality may be differentiated, not in the form of opposing dualities, but rather complementary parti-

culars. In this way the ultimate oneness of reality is preserved. It remains, basically, integrative and not divisive. The inclusionist does not deny the existence of a supernatural realm but he views it from the perspective of the natural. Since nature operates in terms of universal laws rationally understandable, any interaction between the supernatural and the natural is of the same kind. Such a presupposition rules out both miracles and the appeal to mystery.

Regarding pluralism it may be pointed out that it accepts most of the presuppositions of the inclusionists. Except for its final conclusion, the differences are one of degree. It accepts the inclusionist's open view of truth and process view of reality. It agrees with the differentiated but non-dialectical view of reality. In fact, this is a key presupposition for the pluralist; it makes possible not just one religion but a number of them coexisting in harmony. It is more emphatic in its denial of epistemological absolutism and its assertion of relativism. Man can know only partial truth. Thus, there is truth in every religion and no one religion embodies complete truth. Relativism, in fact, is perhaps the central tenet of pluralism. Man's relationship to God is a relative one in that it takes many forms, varying from culture to culture. Thus, there is no universal standard by which conclusive judgments can be made regarding the truth or falsity of a particular religion. Ethics are relative and there is no universal standard to judge by. Man is himself a relative being in that he is finite and cannot know absolute truth. It is man's finitude and individuation which results in a plurality of religions. It is important to recognize that relativism does not lead the pluralist to atheism or scepticism but to humbleness and tolerance.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

Study-Conference Jerusalem July 1968

As a rule the congresses of the International Association for the History of Religions are held every five years in different countries. The XIth International Congress for the History of Religions was held in 1965 in Claremont, U.S.A. The XIIth International Congress will be organized in Sweden in 1970. Apart from these congresses the I.A.H.R. also holds Study-Conferences. In 1964 and in 1966 scholars met in Strasbourg, France and in Messina, Italy.

There is, however, another tradition. At the request of many scholars from the East the IXth International Congress for the History of Religions was held in Tokyo in 1958. Unfortunately a meeting in India in 1963 could not be organized. The General Assembly of the I.A.H.R. decided that the line of meetings in the East should not be abandoned. Therefore an invitation of the Israel Society for the Study of Religions was gladly accepted. This meant that in 1968 another meeting in the East could be organized, viz. in Jerusalem.

During the months before the Study-Conference there were many and frequent contacts between the local organizing committee in Jerusalem (chairman Professor Dr. G. Scholem, secretary Professor Dr. R. J. Z. Werblowsky), the Afro-Asian Secretariat in Tokyo (chairman Professor Dr. T. Ishizu) and the I.A.H.R. Secretariat in Amsterdam (Professor Dr. C. J. Bleeker and the undersigned). The visits of Professor Bleeker to Jerusalem and of Professor Werblowsky to Amsterdam proved to be very fruitful for the preparations of the Study-Conference.

As a result of these preparations the Study-Conference could be held in Jerusalem July 14-19 1968. The general theme which was chosen read: Types of Redemption. H. I. H. Prince Mikasa of Japan had kindly accepted the request to become the Honorary President of the conference.

Apart from the considerable help by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the organizers of the conference received subsidies and support

from UNESCO, the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and several other bodies and institutions.

On Sunday July 14 1968 the Study-Conference was opened in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Apart from the official words of welcome the President of the I.A.H.R., Professor Dr. G. Widengren, expressed his views on the study of the history of religions in a fundamental speech.

The meeting was attended by almost 100 participants from all parts of the world. The list of the scholars present mentioned names from Ceylon, Great Britain, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switserland, Uganda, U.S.A. and Vietnam. Because of the limited number of participants all papers could be read in plenary sessions. Every lecture was followed by a general discussion.

The programme of lectures showed that many fields of the history of religions were covered by the lecturers. The idea of redemption was described in the following religions: Greek religion, ancient Egypt, Christianity, Judaism, Japanese folk religion and other Japanese religions, Buddhism, Vedic India, Hinduism, Islam, Ganda traditional belief, ancient Mexican religion, Sasanian Zoroastrianism etc. Although one paper with general reflections on the theme of the conference could not be held, Professor Werblowsky summarized the meeting during the closing session of the conference, so that the theme was also approached in a general way.

During the Study-Conference a number of trips were organized for the participants. There were visits to Jerusalem itself, various musea, Bethlehem and Qumran. Two receptions were held, one by the President of the State of Israel and one by the President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

The presence of a number of members of the Executive Board of the I.A.H.R. enabled them to hold an unofficial meeting during which a number of matters concerning the Association were discussed. On the other hand the presence of many scholars from the East and from Africa gave rise to a meeting of the Afro-Asian delegates. This meeting will undoubtedly show its results in the future extension of the I.A.H.R.

Surveying the points mentioned above one is rightly inclined to state that the Study-Conference of the I.A.H.R. in Jerusalem was

very successful. All participants went home after a most inspiring meeting. One important thing, however, should be added: all scholars present in Jerusalem were impressed by the atmosphere of friendship and goodfellowship which so strongly characterized this Study-Conference.

Therefore this meeting in Jerusalem will be gratefully remembered by the organizers and the participants. Moreover the presence of scholars from Africa marks a new chapter in the history of the I.A.H.R. The Study-Conference in Jerusalem continued the line of meetings in the East. It underlined the truly international character of the I.A.H.R.

L. J. R. Ort
Deputy Secretary General
of the I.A.H.R.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BERGMAN, Jan, *Ich bin Isis, Studien zum Memphitischen Hintergrund der griechischen Isisaretologien,* Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum 3-Uppsala, 1968, 349 p.

BIERMANN, B. M., *Las Casas und seine Sendung.* — Mainz, Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1968, 92 p.

GERNET, Louis, *Anthropologie de la Grèce Antique, „textes à l'appui"* — Paris, François Maspero, 1968, 455 p.

MCLEOD, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion* — Oxford, at the Claredon Press, 1968, 259 p.

RINGGREN, H., *Religionens Form och Funktion* — Lund, C. W. K. Gleerups Bokförlag, 1968, 171 p.

RUDGE, Peter F., *Ministry and Management, The Study of Ecclesiastical Administration* — London, Tavistock Publications in Association with Hicks Smith & Sons, 1968, 191 p.

WALLACE-HADRILL, D. S., *The Greek Patristic View of Nature* — New York, Manchester University Press, Barnes & Noble Inc., 1968, 150 p.

WINK, W., *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition,* Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 7 — Cambridge University Press, 1968, 132 p.

Periodicals:

Folklore, Volume 79, Summer 1968.

History of Religion, An International Journal for Comparative Historical Studies, Volume 8, Number 1, August 1968; Number 2, November 1968.

Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kengyū), edited by Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, Volume XVI No. 1, December 1967 (32), Vol. XVI No. 2, March 1968 (32).

Kairos, Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie, X. Jahrgang 1968, Heft 3.

Theologie der Gegenwart, 11. Jg., 1968, Heft 3.

Theologische Zeitschrift, herausgegeben von der Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Basel, Jahrgang 24, Heft 4, Juli-August 1968; Heft 5, September-Oktober 1968.

Vetera Christianorum 5, 1968, Instituto di Letteratura Christiana Antica, Università degli Studi, Bari.

HITTITE ROYAL PRAYERS

BY

PH. H. J. HOUWINK TEN CATE

Amsterdam

An important kind of texts among the many religious texts found at the German excavations in Bogazköy-Hattusas, the Hittite capital, are the royal prayers. In his "Catalogue des Textes Hittites" E. Laroche has given an enumeration of these compositions under the more general heading of "Hymnes et Prières." [1]) The same author published an excellent study of the Hittite prayer in general called "La Prière hittite: vocabulaire et typologie." [2]) Nevertheless the royal prayers form an interesting subject for further study, because they constitute a special genre of great importance for the religious feeling and way of thinking of the Hittites and also because next to purely historical texts they are of great significance for the history of the Hittite New Empire (1450-1200 B.C.). This study aims only at a short evaluation of the contemporary achievements in this interesting field.

Many of these royal prayers have already been published in a philological edition. The prayers of Mursilis II devoted to the Plague which ravaged the country for no less than twenty years and also dealing with external difficulties are available in two large studies, "Die Pestgebete des Mursilis" by A. Götze [3]) and „Hittite Prayers of Mursili II" by O.R. Gurney. [4]) In "Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament" A. Götze presented a number of translation in the chapter "Hittite Prayers." [5])

---

1) E. Laroche, *Catalogue des Textes Hittites* II, *Revue Hittite et Asianique* fasc. 59 (1956), pp. 114-116, nos. 272-291.

2) *École pratique des Hautes Études,* Ve Section, *Sciences Religieuses*; Annuaire tome LXXII (1964/5), pp. 3-29.

3) *Kleinasiatische Forschungen* I, Weimar, 1927-1930, pp. 161-251.

4) *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* XXVII (1940), pp. 3-163.

5) J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament,* Princeton, 1950, pp. 393-400 (translations of Cat. 275, 277, 279.2, 282, 283 A and C, 285 and 287). See, too, G. Furlani, La Religione degli Hittiti, Bologna, 1936, pp. 262-280.

The Hittites themselves called such a text an *arkuwar* after the most important section in which the king justifies himself in a plea directed to the Gods. This pleading forms the central part of a greater composition consisting generally of a number of independent parts: address — hymn of praise — transitional passage — prayer proper in several sections. The *arkuwar* belongs to the prayer proper. The climax of the argument precedes the end of the main part which is usually concluded with smaller components, prayers for blessing or intercession and once an afterthought. [6]) This structural build-up is considered to be of Mesopotamian origin and is derived from the Accadian incantation. [7]) This complex structure made it possible for the scribes to be inspired during their work by the corresponding replicas of older texts. The preceding remarks are meant to give the reader an added sensitivity to the rhetorical phrasing and the transparent construction of these prayers.

In a prominent section of his above-mentioned study Laroche has outlined the background and function of this type of prayer starting out from a penetrating analysis of the profane use of the term *arkuwar*. [8]) As a servant approaches his master in order to justify himself, as a vassal-prince in conflict with a colleague argues his personal view of the case in the presence of the sovereign king, in such a way the Hittite king and with him often the queen addresses the Sun-goddess of Arinna or the Storm-god of Hatti, the most important Gods of the Pantheon, or the Gods in general. The concept of a political letter written by a Hittite king to Salmanassar I (1274-1245 B.C.) may be used to illustrate the meaning of this Hittite stem and also forms a good trait d'union to the religious uses of both the verb *arkuwai-* and the noun *arkuwar*. [9]) The Hittite king writes in this concept meant to be sent in Accadian translation: "And since you will *plead your*

---

6) The structure of the royal prayers was first determined by Gurney, *l.c.*, pp. 11-12 with respect to the compositions of Cat. 282 and 283. See with respect to Cat. 274-276 H. G. Güterbock in his article "The Composition of the Hittite Prayers to the Sun," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* LXXVIII (1958), pp. 237-245.

7) Cf. Güterbock, *l.c.*, p. 242.

8) Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, section 3, p. 14 ff.

9) See H. Otten, *Archiv für Orientforschung* XXII (1968/9), pp. 112-113 referring to 679/z.

cause to the Gods, as soon as they bring you this tablet, read it aloud in the presence of the great Gods." [10])

Laroche who, in my opinion, rightly stresses the juridical background to both terms, is perhaps too specific in his translations, *arkuwai-* "s'excuser, plaider" and *arkuwar* "défense contre une accusation, excuse d'une faute, plaidoyer justificatif." [11]) It is not to be excluded that the terms could also be used in a positive sense, "to argue", "to plead" (*arkuwai-*) and "argument," "proposition" (*arkuwar*). The verb *arkuwai-* is used not only when someone offers an apology but also in explaining one's merits or complaining about injustice. But for these prayers in which often a feeling of guilt is expressed, if not with respect to the deeds of the king himself then in connection with those of his predecessor, Laroche's translations make good sense.

In contrast to the royal prayers spoken in times of adversity or mental distress, the purely historical texts present an uninterrupted and well-balanced record of the past. Nevertheless there are strong indications that also the historical texts just as the treaties and other law-texts which needed a religious sanction were deposited before the Gods in the temple. [12]) The royal prayers derive their historical importance from the obvious fact that the utterances are done in a spirit of repentance and honesty more so than in the historical texts. Both types reached their literary apex during the reign of Mursilis II (± 1340-1310 B.C.). Then the scribes for the first time achieved historical compositions dedicated to a central theme. [13]) The Plague Prayers

10) Cf. Otten, *l.c.*

11) Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 15 and passim.

12) See with respect to the historical texts the colophon of KBo V 6 (manuscript A for fragment 28 of the "Deeds") IV: 16-18, "Seventh tablet, (text) not complete. Not yet made into a bronze tablet" (cf. Güterbock, *JCS* X 1956), p. 97 and the added comments *ibidem*, p. 47). See also KBo III 4 IV: 47-48 in Gurney's translation "Whatsoever the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, further vouchsafes to me, I will record it and lay it before her," *The Hittites*[1], Pelican A 259, p. 174 (Gurney chooses for Götze's second alternative, see Götze, *Die Annalen des Mursilis, MVAeG* XXXVIII, Leipzig, 1933, p. 137). Hattusilis says "However, what countries of the enemy I conquered while I was a minor, that I shall make (into) a tablet separately; and I shall set it up before the Goddess" (Hattusilis' "Apology" I: 73-74 = Sturtevant-Bechtel, *A Hittite Chrestomathy*, Philadelphia, 1935, pp. 68-69).

13) E.g. "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II" edited by H. G. Güterbock, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* X (1956), pp. 41, 75 and 107 ff., and Mursilis' own "Ten Years Annals" edited by Götze, AM, p. 14 ff. (cf. note 12).

from this period represent the pinnacle of Hittite literature in general.

Conclusive indications, the use of *arkuwai-* and *arkuwar* in either text or colophon, characterize all the Plague Prayers of Mursilis and also all compositions of Muwatallis, Hattusilis and Puduhepas treated below as a prayer of presentation or *arkuwar*.[14]) In analogy other texts may be added: the prayer of Arnuwandas and Asmunikal about the disruption of the cults in the northern provinces, a prayer of an unnamed Hittite king to the Sun-god and also the prayer of Kantuzzilis, prince at the court, and the prayer to the Sun-god meant for an arbitrary individual. The three last prayers are closely connected and could be considered as parallel versions.[15]) Witness the vocabulary and the religious ideas expressed therein, the introducing hymn to all three was clearly inspired by some Accadian hymn.[16]) The following Chart may serve to indicate date and origin, deity to whom it is directed, and subject of the most important royal prayers.

Cat. no.	*King*	*Deity*	*Subject*
277/8[17])	Arnuwandas and Asmunikal (± 1400 B.C.)	Sun-goddess of Arinna	Interruption of the cults in the northern provinces
276[18])	Unnamed Hittite king	Male Sun-god	External difficulties
283 C[19])	Unnamed Hittite king	Sun-goddess of Arinna	Plague and external difficulties
283 E	Mursilis (± 1340-1310 B.C.)	Sun-goddess of Arinna	The relation between his wife and the ruling queen

14) Cf. *arkuwai-* in Cat. 279.1, 279.2, 279.4, 284.2, 285 and KBo XI 1 (see Laroche, *La Prière hittite,* p. 16 notes 3 and 4) and *arkuwar* in Cat. 279.1, 279.2, 282 A, 283 D, 285, KBo XI 1, 286 and 287 (see Laroche, *La Prière hittite,* p. 16 notes 1 and 2).

15) Cf. Güterbock's article quoted in note 6.

16) Cf. Güterbock, *l.c.,* pp. 241-242.

17) See E. von Schuler, *Die Kaskäer,* Berlin, 1965, pp. 152-165 and Goetze, *ANET* 1, pp. 399-400.

18) Cf. Güterbock's article quoted in note 6; for this early date see O. Carruba, *Das Beschwörungsritual für die Göttin Wisurijanza,* Wiesbaden, 1966, p. 32.

19) Cf. Gurney's thesis as quoted in note 4; for this early date see O. Carruba, *Wisurijanza,* p. 46. See also Goetze, *ANET* 1, p. 396.

Cat. no.	*King*	*Deity*	*Subject*
284 [20])	Mursilis (tenth year or later)	In all probability the Sun-goddess of Arinna	Conflict with the ruling queen
283 A [21])	Mursilis alone	Sun-goddess of Arinna	Plague and external difficulties
282 [22])	Mursilis and the queen (second wife and thus later)	Tutelary deity Telibinus	Plague and external difficulties
279.1 [23])	Mursilis (seventeenth year)	All the Gods and Goddesses of the Oath	Plague
279.4 [24])	Mursilis	Enumeration of Gods among which the Storm-god as well as the Gods of Hatti and Arinna	Plague
281 [25])	Mursilis	Long enumeration of Gods	Plague
279.2 [26])	Mursilis	Storm-god of Hatti, Gods of Hatti, my lords	Plague
279.3 [27])	Mursilis (position in group undetermined)	Sun-goddess of Arinna, Gods, my lords	Plague
KBo XI 1 [28])	Muwatallis (± 1310-1280 B.C.)	Storm-god of Kummanni, Hebat and other Gods	Interruption of the cults

20) Cf. Laroche, *Ugaritica* III, Paris, 1956, p. 101 ff.

21) Cf. Gurney's thesis as quoted in note 4; translation by Goetze in *ANET* [1], p. 396.

22) Cf. Gurney's thesis as quoted in note 4; translation by Goetze in *ANET* [1], pp. 396-397.

23) See Götze, *KlF* I, p. 164 ff. (cf. note 3).

24) See *KlF* I, p. 242 ff.

25) Cf. Güterbock, "Mursili's accounts of Suppiluliuma's dealings with Egypt," *Revue Hittite et Asianique* fasc. 66-67 (1960), pp. 57-63.

26) See Götze, *KlF* I, p. 206 ff.; translation by Goetze in *ANET* [1], pp. 394-396.

27) See Götze, *KlF* I, p. 236 ff.

28) Cf. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate and F. Josephson, "Muwatallis' Prayer to the Storm-god of Kummanni," *Revue Hittite et Asianique* fasc. 81 (1967), pp. 101-140.

Cat. no.	*King*	*Deity*	*Subject*
285 [29])	Muwatallis	Long enumeration of Gods	"In case of an emergency"
286 [30])	Hattusilis and Puduhepas (± 1275-1250 B.C.)	Sun-goddess of Arinna	The royal succession
287 [31])	Pudehepas	Sun-goddess of Arinna	The health of Hattusilis, her husband

Sometimes important indications with respect to the use of these compositions are given in the text itself or in the colophon. It goes without saying that the king often refers to himself as the "priest". Especially Mursilis and Muwatallis do this often. In a number of passages the fact that the king functions as priest to the Sun-goddess of Arinna is used as a general designation for his royal position. [32]) Although of little literary value, the general *arkuwar* of Muwatallis is of real interest for the understanding of the procedure. [33]) In the two important manuscripts two formative stages of the composition have been preserved, the concept as probably dictated by the king and the later official version. [34]) This text may be considered the standard type of this genre. "When things get too much for a man and he presents himself for the Gods in prayer, he sets up two offering-tables of wickerwork covered (with a cloth) on the roof in the presence of the Sun-god," the text runs. [35]) Goetze expressed this general character in the added title "Prayer to be Spoken in an Emergency." A very long enumeration of local deities mentioned regionally while due attention is given to divine mountains and rivers of each district forms an essential part of the text after a short listing of the main Gods. All the offer-

29) Cf. F. M. Th. (de Liagre) Böhl, *Theologisch Tijdschrift* L (1916), p. 306 ff.; M. Witzel, *Hethitische Keilschrift-Urkunden* (= *Keilschriftliche Studien* IV (1924)), p. 86 ff.; translation by Goetze in *ANET* [1], pp. 397-399.

30) For this composition see Güterbock, *Siegel aus Bogazköy* I, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, Beiheft V, 1940, p. 12 ff.

31) Translation by Goetze in *ANET* [1], pp. 393-394.

32) Cf. Cat. 279.1, 179.2, 279.3, 279.4 (Mursilis) and Cat. 285 (Muwatallis).

33) Cf. note 29 above.

34) Cf. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, "Muwatallis' Prayer to be spoken in an Emergency," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* XXVII (1968), pp. 204-208.

35) In Goetze's translation (with slight changes). I am quoting the following passages: I: 2-5; IV: 45-50, 59-61.

ings are precisely specified. "When His Majesty finishes breaking the loaves, he makes into a plea the matters which are in his mind. But when the presentation of the plea is concluded, he breaks three loaves amongst which a red one for all the Gods of the land." [35]) There follow more offerings and then, finally, "They make two furnaces of wood and in front of the offering-tables he burns the loaves which he breaks." [35])

There is no doubt that also were clear indications are absent the presentation of an *arkuwar* was embedded in a ritual of offering ceremonies (breaking of bread and libations). Quite characteristically the colophon of Cat. 283 A mentions the existence of a separate tablet in which the *mugawar* was described. [36]) Laroche defines *mugawar* as the terminus technicus for a ritual used to evoke and attract a deity. [37]) This "attracting" of the Gods is especially found in the rituals of the Evocatio type. [38]) The magical imagery used herefore consisted in the propelling of the Gods, i.e. their statues, along tracks of coloured wool. [39]) The wording of our type of text does indeed sometimes refer to the absence of a God who is to be attracted: "Now if, O honoured Telibinus, thou art up in heaven among the Gods; if thou art gone to the sea or to the mountains to wander about, or art gone into the enemy's country to battle, now let the exquisite refreshment (arising) from cedar (and) oil invite thee; and come back again into thy temple. Behold now, I am evoking thee with (offerings of) bread (and) drink; be thou fully nourished; and what I say unto thee — hold thine ear inclined to me and hear it." [40])

Prayers were sometimes repeatedly recited. According to the colophon of Cat. 283 A this text was used during seven days by Mursilis in Hattusas and thereafter for the same period of time in Arinna. [41]) A scribe even had to recite Cat. 282 each day for an unspecified period of time, referring in his first words *expressis verbis* to his royal

---

36) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 38-39 (note that Gurney C = Laroche Cat. 283A!) for Cat. 283 A IV: 7-8.

37) See Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, pp. 20-24.

38) See especially Cat. 416 as edited by L. Zuntz, "Un testo ittita di scongiuri," *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* XCVI (1937), pp. 477-546; translation by Goetze in *ANET* [1], pp. 351-353.

39) Cf. Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 22 and Goetze, *Kleinasien* [2], p. 160.

40) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 16-17 for Cat. 282 B I: 7-14.

41) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 36-37 for Cat. 282 A IV: 19-21.

masters: "The scribe re[ads this] tablet to the deity every day, [and ?] praises the deity: O Telibinus, a mighty (and) honoured God art thou. Mursilis, the king, thy servant, has sent me, and the queen, thy handmaid, they have sent (saying): "Go! Telibinus, our lord, our personal God, evoke!" " [42])

The colophon belonging to Cat. 283 A mentions how Mursilis incorporated the phrases of another tablet in his own prayer. [43]) It is possible now, thanks to the progress of knowledge with respect to the Hittite historical grammar, to confirm Gurney's conjecture [44]) based at that time on the evidence of the contents alone — that this tablet might be identified with Cat. 283 C. [45]) This then refers to the *arkuwar* proper as central part of the prayer. [46]) But also the continuation of the invocation is not very original. It is clearly inspired on the invocation of the prayer of Arnuwandas and Asmunikal in which also the deep religiosity of the Hittites, their extreme care for temples, statues, ceremonies and cultus, has been extensively treated. [47]) The hymn of praise in this prayer may best be characterized as a transposition on the Sun-goddess of Arinna of a hymn meant for the male Sun-god as given in Cat. 274-276. [48]) The three most important parts of Cat. 283 A are therefore and adaptation (the central part), a transposition (hymn of praise for the Goddess) and a recreation (the continuation of the invocation) respectively. They all depend upon earlier compositions.

A typical Hittite trait missing so far in Mesopotamian examples is the idea of intervention. [49]) Frequently the Sun-god or a tutelary deity is called upon to act as an intermediary and to transmit the words

---

42) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 16-17 for Cat. 282 B I: 1-6.

43) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 38-39 for Cat. 283 A IV: 2-3.

44) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 12-14, 108-109 and 119.

45) On a number of points — the spelling, the use of certain particles, the medio-passive in "dynamic function" — Cat. 283 C (= Gurney D!) sides with Middle Hittite, while Cat. 283 A clearly shows the modernizations typical for the period of Mursilis II.

46) See also KBo XII 132 which has been compared to Cat. 277 by Laroche, *Orientalistische Literatur* LIX (1964), c. 565. In my opinion this text closely resembles Cat. 283 C and A.

47) Cf. note 17 above.

48) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 10-11 and the article by Güterbock quoted in note 6, p. 237.

49) Cf. Güterbock, *JAOS* LXXVIII (1958), p. 242.

of the king to the God for whom they are intended. This can already be observed in the prayers to the Sun-god (Cat. 274-276) [50]) and it turns up again in Cat. 285 of Muwatallis [51]) and in an even stronger measure in Cat. 287 where Puduhepas pleads for the health of her husband stipulating his achievements with regard to the northern districts lost during the reign of Arnuwandas or perhaps even earlier, but regained by him. [52]) One of the many deities whose mediation she requests is Zintuhis: "Zintuhis, my mistress, beloved grandchild of the Storm-god and the Sun-goddess of Arinna! For the Storm-god and the Sun-goddess of Arinna (you are their) pectoral and from hour to hour they continually look down upon you. And now Z[in]tuhis, my mistress, [show] your divine power [in this matter] and convey life and long years for Hattusilis, your servant, to the Storm-god, your grandfather, and to the Sun-goddess of Arinna, your grandmother, and may these come forth for them from their mouth!" [53])

At the recitation of a royal prayer an audience obviously could be present, for both Cat. 282 B and 283 A include the following passage — after a prayer for blessing: "And the congregation cries "Let it be so!" " [54]) With respect to Cat. 282 A it is worth mentioning that the scribe who reads this tablet in doing so represents the king, for the colophon states: "Single tablet, finished; when the scribe daily pleads on behalf of the king before Telibinus." [55])

Next to these concise remarks concerning nature, structure and use of these royal prayers, the Gods to whom they were directed and the subjects dealt with in them should also be examined. Whenever the prayer is not directed to all the Gods (without further distinction) or to a long list of deities, it concerns as a rule the Sun-goddess of Arinna or the Storm-god of Hatti, the principal figures of the Pantheon, who according to recent archaeological research shared a double temple in Hattusas. [56]) Both Gods are also portrayed in the main chamber of the

50) These texts formed the starting-point for Güterbock's remark.

51) Cf. Cat. 285 — for which see note 29 above — III: 20-24 (the Sun-god) and III: 35-37 (the Storm-god Pihassassis), cf. Güterbock, *JAOS* LXXVIII (1958), p. 245.

52) Cf. Cat. 287 — for which see note 31 — III: 31 ff.

53) Cf. Cat. 287 III: 43 — IV: 7.

54) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 34-35 with respect to Cat. 282 B II: 18-19 and pp. 36-37 for Cat. 283 A III: 43-44.

55) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 36-37 for Cat. 282 A IV: 19-21.

56) See K. Bittel, *Archiv für Orientforschung* XXII (1968/9), p. 110 with

rock-sanctuary in Yazilikaya. [57]) The deities addressed to generally belong to the indigenous Anatolian pantheon. This is specifically valid for the last example of my Chart, Cat. 287 spoken by queen Puduhepas. [58]) A passage from the invocation of this latter prayer is of special significance, since it presents clear evidence for the identification of the Sun-goddess of Arinna with the Hurrian Goddess Hebat: "To the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, mistress of the Hittite lands, queen of heaven and earth. O Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, queen of all the countries, in Hatti-land you gave yourself the name "Sun-goddess of Arinna," but furthermore in the land which you made into the cedar's land, you gave yourself the name "Hebat." " [59])

A passage from Cat. 286 attests to the close connection between the Hittite king and queen on the one hand and the Sun-goddess of Arinna on the other: "To the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, mistress of the countries, queen of heaven and earth, mistress of the kings and queens of Hatti land, torch of the Hittite country, it is you who [invest] the kings and queens of Hatti land. Upon which king or queen of Hatti land you, O Sun-goddess of Arinna, gaze down, he flourishes on your account, through the Sun-goddess of Arinna. You who are accustomed to elevate (the one), you who are accustomed to throw down (the other), in the presence of the Gods you took as your portion (?) the Hittite lands because of your esteem for the Storm-god of Nerik, the Storm-god of Zippalanda, your son!" [60])

---

respect to Temple I which used to be called the temple for the Storm-god of Hatti: "...Es lag da eine zweite, selbständige Raumgruppe mit Lichthöfen und einem sehr grossem Gelass (.....), dass in seinen Ausmassen dem bisher schon bekannt gewesenen Allerheiligsten nahezu gleichkommt und das höchstwahrscheinlich als zweites Adyton aufzufassen ist, so dass man es wohl mit einem Doppeltempel zu tun hat, der für den Wettergott und für die Sonnengöttin von Arinna bestimmt gewesen sein dürfte."

57) See no. 43 (Hebat who is here identificated with the Sun-goddess of Arinna) leading the procession of Goddesses, and — confronting her — nos 42 (Storm-god, here Tessub?) and 41 (Storm-god of Hatti) leading the group of male Gods: see Laroche, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* VII (1952), p. 116 and the often reproduced main scene e.g. in E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst der Hethiter,* no. 76.

58) See Goetze, *Kleinasien*[2], München, 1957, p. 135 together with notes 3 and 4 referring to both Cat. 286 and 287.

59) Literally "you put to yourself the name ...", cf. Goetze, *Kleinasien*[2], p. 137 for this example of official syncretism and see also note 57. All this refers to Cat. 287 I: 1-6.

60) Cat. 286 I: 1-13 as also translated by Goetze, *Kleinasien* [2], p. 137.

A text which has often been quoted in discussions about the character of Hittite kingship is IBoT I 30: "When the king pays homage to the Gods, a priest declares: "Let the labarnas-king be pleasing to the Gods! The land belongs to the Storm-god, heaven and earth with the people belong to the Storm-god and he made the labarnas-king governor and gave him whole Hatti land. The labarnas shall govern the whole land with his hands. Whoever touches the person of the labarnas-king and (his) domain, let the Storm-god destroy him!" [61]) This passage characterizes the king as a kind of administrator ruling on behalf of the Storm-god. From a remarkable festival text [62]) scholars have concluded that the queens of the Hittites were identified in some respects at the time of their death with the Sun-goddess of Arinna. Possibly the Goddess also had chthonic characteristics [63]) and on the strength of this Güterbock adds this closing remark: "Ja, eben weil sie eine Unterweltsgöttin war und die Königinnen nach dem Tode ihr ähnlich wurden (wie der Pharao dem Osiris!)?" [64])

Exceptional iconographic representations admit of a similar explanation. On the rock-relief of Firaktin Hattusilis III and Puduhepas wear the same garments as the deities to which they pour a libation, the Storm-god of Hatti and the Sun-goddess of Arinna respectively. [65]) A seal impression found in the excavations of Ugarit [66]) depicts Tudhaliyas IV in the embrace of the Storm-god Muwatallis. [67]) He also

---

61) For this text see Goetze, *JCS* I (1947), pp. 90-91; Güterbock, "Authority and Law in the Hittite Kingdom," JAOS Suppl. XVII (1954), p. 16; Gurney in Hooke (editor), *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, pp. 113-114; Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 10.

62) KUB XXV 14 I: 23 ff. as translated by Gurney in his article referred to in the preceding note, pp. 120-121.

63) For the possibly original character of the Goddess as a chthonic deity see J. G. Macqueen, *Anatolian Studies* IX (1959), pp. 171-188.

64) Güterbock in his chapter "Religion und Kultus der Hethiter" in G. Walser (editor), *Neuere Hethiterforschung, Historia Einzels.* Heft VII, Wiesbaden, 1964, p. 59 note 25.

65) See K. Bittel in his contribution to the book mentioned in the preceding note, p. 127 note 6: cf. the reproductions in H. Th. Bossert, *Altanatolien*, Berlin, 1942, nos 550-552 and E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst der Hethiter*, no. 101.

66) Cf. *Ugaritica* III, Paris, 1954, fig. 24, 26 and Pl. III-IV (already adduced by Bittel as quoted in note 65).

67) This type of representation is found more often, but elsewhere the king wears a priestly robe in this situation, cf. Güterbock, *SBo* I fig. 38 a (see note 30) for Muwatallis and Tudhaliyas IV in Chamber B of Yazilikaya (e.g. E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst der Hethiter*, nos 84-85).

wears the same costume as the deity. The Sun-goddess of Arinna on this same impression is an exact replica of Puduhepas as represented in Firaktin. [68]) Although Hittite kings "become Gods" at their death, as the expression goes, Hattusilis as well as Tudhaliyas wear the characteristic attribute of the Gods, one or more horns sidelong of the pointed hat. Bittel rightly stresses the problematical background of this portrayal: we encounter a representation which essentially differs from the conventional usage. [69]) Perhaps it could be formulated in this way. There are iconographic indications for an excessive identification in thirteenth century art of king and queen with those deities which they represent in their political function. One should not conclude this to be a complete identification however, since the above-mentioned expression prevents them "to be God" during their lifetime. [70])

The thoughts which are expressed in the hymns and in the prayers proper are typical for the strongly rationalistic and somewhat formalistic approach of Hittite thinking in general. Feelings of responsibility and guilt often come to the fore. Rhetorically the kings try to absolvate themselves from supposed accusations that have crossed their minds: "Hattusilis, your servant, and Puduhepas, your handmaid, did make their plea as follows: "As long as my father Mursilis was still alive, when my father dealt highhandedly with the Gods, my lords, in any affair whatsoever, I was not involved in that business of my father in any way. I was still young. When within the palace the process of Tawannannas, your handmaid, took place, when my father humiliated Tawannannas, the queen, because she was indeed a handmaid of the God(dess), you, my mistress, were the one who knew in [your] divine soul, [whether the humil]iation [of the queen] was in accordance with your intentions [or whether it] was [not in accordance with your in]tentions." " [71])

Laroche phrased these eloquent words to describe their basic relationship with the divine powers: "Le Hittite exprime les rapports de l'homme à son dieu non en termes de grâce ou de sentiments, mais en

---

68) This was already remarked by Laroche, *Ugaritica* III, pp. 114-115.

69) Cf. Bittel as referred to in note 65: "Hier liegt also ein Problem, das sich mit den verfügbaren Texten und Monumenten nicht lösen lasst."

70) Cf. the closing remark by Gurney in Hooke (ed.), *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship,* p. 121.

71) Cat. 286 I: 14-26 (see Güterbock's translation in *SBo* I, p. 12, cf. note 30).

termes de droit et de jugement." [72]) So e.g. in a prayer of Mursilis II "the place of judgement [to] wh[ich] the Gods come" — or with another text restoration — "the Gods wh[o] come to the place of judgement." [73]) In a prayer of Muwatallis this expression recurs, [74]) while Hattusilis and Puduhepas speak as follows on behalf of their country: "[And if] those sins are also still present to some extent before the Gods and some God has been invoked on account of that evil thing and he attends to it and if, as soon as the Storm-god and the Gods come to the assembly, someone mentions that evil thing in the assembly, then the Sun-goddess of Arinna and the Storm-god of Hatti should take to their heart the matter of the *dahanga* belonging to the Storm-god of Nerik and therefore, O Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, O Gods, cast away that evil thing from Hatti land! Hattusas, the place of assembly for the Gods, Arinna, your beloved city, Nerik and Zippalanda, towns of your son, may appear before your eyes!" [75])

In a highly emotional tone Mursilis tries to exculpate himself with respect to his dealings with the ruling queen and wife of his predecessor Tawannannas whom he dethroned and relegated to a place of exile in the country: "[...wheth]er she died and [w]as [...] or whether she did not die. I made an inquiry about the af[fair of Tawannannas] and it was established for me (by the oracle) not to kill her, but it was established to confine her. And at that time therefore I did not kill her, but I ousted her and made her Siwanzanna-priestess. And because it was established to confine, I did confine her and I gave her an estate. Nothing lacks her in her soul. Bread, water and everything are being served to her. Nothing is lacking her: she lives and sees the Sun of heaven with her own eyes, always, and she always eats the bread of life, but just this was my single ruling and only in this respect I punished her that I sent her down from the palace, that I ousted her and made her Siwanzanna-priestess! And this was my single ruling. O Gods, set this case down for hearing and arrange a formal inquiry!" [76])

72) Laroche, *La Prière hittite,* p. 17.

73) Cf. Güterbock's article referred to in note 25, p. 59.

74) Cf. Cat. 285 — for which see note 29 above — III: 11-12.

75) Cf. Cat. 286 IV: 14-28 (the passage has not been studied so far).

76) Cf. Cat. 284.2 II: 1-17, cf. Houwink ten Cate, "Mursilis II, de bronnen voor een karakterschets," p. 27 together with the notes 43 and 44. The verbs *piran katta tai-* and *punuss-* belong to the profane process terminology.

I do not believe that these examples which could easily be multiplied, should be classified as mere metaphorical in a stylistic sense. According to Hittite ideas a process before the court of divine powers underlies every conflict situation in history.[77]) This is clearly manifest in the words used to convey a declaration of war: "To Uhha-zitis I sent a messenger and I wrote to him: "My subjects who came to you, because you did not return them to me, (when) I repeatedly requested their return, and (because) you were in the habit to call me a small boy and (because) you always belittled me, come now! Let us fight together and the Storm-god, my lord, may decide the lawsuit for us!" "[78]) This declaration meant war between two independent powers. On purpose Hattusilis III uses the same expression in starting his rebellion against his nephew Urhi-Tesub, the legitimate king on the Hittite throne: "And, firm in (my) respect for my brother, I did not do anything. And for seven years I submitted. But he (Urhi-Tesub) at the command of a God and the suggestion of man tried to destroy me. And he took Hakpis and Nerik away from me. And I did not submit any longer. And I made war upon him. But when I made war upon him, I did not do it (as) a "defilement." Did I rebel against him in the chariot or rebel against him within the palace? I sent him a declaration (of war) as an (open) enemy: "You started hostilities with me. Now (are) a great king; but as for me, the one fortress that you left me — of (that) one (I) am king. Come now! Istar of Samuha and the Storm-god of Nerik shall decide the lawsuit for us!" "[79])

These examples from two different historical texts give proof that the idea of divine judgement also permeates the Hittite historical texts. Since every prayer of presentation — whether inspired by a Plague, by a military attack from outside, or, by inner doubts about personal responsibilities with respect to the cult of the Gods or the relation to the queen — always originated from a situation of crisis, they all fall back upon this same basic idea.

The prayers give evidence of a proud feeling about the providence and care devoted to the maintenance of temples, statues and cult uten-

77) See in this respect Goetze, *Kleinasien*[2], p. 127 together with note 10 and Laroche, *La Prière hittite,* p. 17.

78) A passage from Mursilis' "Ten Years Annals," *KBo* III 4 II: 9 ff. = Götze, AM, pp. 46-47 (cf. note 12).

79) Hattusilis' Apology III: 61 ff. as translated in Sturtevant-Bechtel, *Hittite Chrestomathy,* p. 77 (cf. note 12).

sils and also to the strict observance of festivals and other ceremonies. Sometimes there is a direct and outspoken appeal to divine self-interest which appears to be closely interwoven with the good fortune of the Hittites themselves, when, in the central part of the prayer the king ardently pleads for deliverance from the scourges of Plague and War. [80]) A second subject treated with equal fervor is the relation to Tawannannas, the former ruling queen, who had been banished from the court. In view of the close relationship between the Hittite queen and the Sun-goddess of Arinna this must have been a matter for deep concern. [81]) In two texts the inability to secure the correct continuation of religious rites and usages constitutes the central theme, the prayer of Arnuwandas and Asmunikal (Cat. 277) and a much later prayer from the time of Muwatallis (KBo XI 1). Here follows a passage chosen from the latter: "If some God of the country is offended and has pl[eaded] with the Storm-god, now I, my majesty Muwa[tallis, lord of the countrie]s, make [this] (the subject of) my plea, and may the Storm-god, my lord, listen to it: the country was great and it [has become of] litt[le importance and . . .] have [. . .]. But as I, my majesty, bid the Gods enter the country of Kummanni; [because negligence oc]curs, [offerings] do not correspond to the usage of the Gods. What population there is now and was [(contemporary) wi]th my father (and) [my] grand[father, those I will consult], and whatever I, my majesty, now find from hieroglyphic records, this I shall carry out, and [what] I have [not] brought into correspondence with the [u]sages o[f the Gods], you, O Storm-god, my lord, know [i]t. And whenever I shall consult a venerable old man, [as] they remember [one (certain)] rite, and tell it, I shall also carry it out." [82])

In his arguing with the Gods "the fearless rationalism of Hittite religion," as Gurney coined the phrase, [83]) is fully apparent. The Gods are told that the Plague clearly is against their own interests: "[What is] this, O Gods, [(that) you have d]one? [You have let in . . .] a Plague, and the land of Hat[ti — al]l of it — is dying, so n[o-one] prepares the (offerings of) food and drink. The [farme]rs who used to sow the

---

80) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 26-27 for Cat. 283 C and A (= D and C respectively in Gurney's notation). I quote a passage below.

81) Cf. Cat. 284; a passage from Cat. 284.2 has been quoted above.

82) Cf. KBo XI 1 — for which see note 28 — par. 4, Obv.: 18-24.

83) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), p. 9.

sacred fields are dead, and so the [sacred] field[s] no[-one] sows (or) reaps. The women of the mill who [used to make] the bread of the Gods are dead and so [they] do not [make] the bread. From whatever corral (or) sheepfold [they used to] select (?) the sacrificial animals (?) oxen and sheep, [now the cowherds] (and) shepherds are dead, and the corral [(and) sheepfold ...]. Now it is coming to pass (that) the foo[d and drink offerings] to the Gods and the sacrificial animals (?) [are] negl[ected]. [And] you come to us, O Gods, [and for] thi[s matter] you hold (us?) guilty; and from mankind your wisdom [has] departed, and there is nothing that we do aright (in your eyes)." [84])

A similar reasoning repeatedly occurs in Mursilis' Plague Prayers stemming from the seventeenth year of his reign: "Suffer not to die the few who are still left to offer loaves and libations." [85])

A final digression on Mursilis' Plague Prayers in general forms a fitting conclusion to this descriptive account of the Hittite royal prayers. I have explained above how the Plague Prayers of his early years are dependent on older compositions. But it should be emphatically stressed that with his later similar prayers this is not the case. After a short address the king immediately turns to the main subject, the history of the Plague and his continuous search for its causes. The structure of these prayers is markedly different from earlier (and later!) compositions of this genre, while their wording and contents resemble the historical texts more than commonly occurs in this type of text. Since a few years historical fragments pertaining to Mursilis' seventeenth year of government do attest to a renewal of royal activities after a complete cessation of warfare on his part in the preceding winter on account of the Plague. At the end of the sixteenth year the king had retired to an isolated place, while the Gasgaeans had tried to profit from the occasion for an important counterattack: "[And there was a Plague in Hatti land] and many died and [(I retreated) before] the Plag[ue and] I, the [ki]ng, [went] to the country of Harziuna [and (as a result) I did not set out (against) enemy countries and (I did)]

---

84) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 26-27 for Cat. 283 A II: 3-19 (C in Gurney's notation).

85) Cf. Cat. 279.2 — for which see note 26 — par. 9 on pp. 214-215 of Götze's text edition; see also par. 11 (pp. 218-219) and in Cat. 279.1 (cf. note 23) par. 8 (pp. 174-175) and 9 (pp. 176-177).

not [...]. [...] the Gasgaean enemy, [whom (I had beaten in that year)], [went] through [Hittite territory. Thu(s the king: "This Gasgaean) goes through Hittite territory and ma]kes war [against me again]." But the Gasgaean enemy [spoke in this manner: "In H]atti land a Plague broke out!" [And] he began to [des]troy [the towns of Hittite territory] in great number." [86])

Already some time ago Güterbock has written how these Plague Prayers might be ordered in a logical sequence. [87]) In Güterbock's opinion Mursilis gradually reached the conclusion that his father bore a personal responsibility in this matter. [88]) In his description of his father's career, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II," he still adheres to his father's point of view. When the Plague culminated to a new and unexpected height, Mursilis apparently realised that there must have been a special cause for the divine wrath. After oracular consultation he began a special inquiry in the royal archives in the course of which at least two tablets were taken out, because they were considered to be relevant to this question. [89]) In the first Plague Prayer his thoughts had already turned to his father as the cause for this disaster: he thinks the way in which Suppiluliumas had grasped power had angered the Gods. In the fourth Plague Prayer he has found out that the Plague arose in the wake of Suppiluliumas' war against Egypt. At the moment on which Cat. 281 was composed he had concluded the Plague to be a divine punishment for the violation of a long-standing treaty with Egypt broken by his father when he first sent troops into Amka. In this text we find mentioning of a "tablet about Egypt." [89]) Mursilis still tries to exempt himself from his responsibility and points to his own youth at that time. Finally, in the second Plague Prayer he accepts his father's guilt as a personal liability: "O Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, O Gods, my lords, it so happens: man is sinful. And also my father sinned and transgressed

86) Cf. Houwink ten Cate, *JNES* XXV (1966), pp. 169 and 177-178.

87) See Güterbock in his article referred to in note 25, pp. 61-62.

88) On this point it may be added that Mursilis II apparently was a highly emotional type of man. I have tried elsewhere to enumerate some of the texts which might be used in the future for a more personal portrayal of this interesting king, cf. note 76.

89) In the first Plague Prayer mention is made of two ancient tablets, the first dealing with the offerings to the river Mala (the Euphrates) and the second concerning Kurustama. The latter may be identical with the "tablet about Egypt" mentioned in Cat. 281, see Güterbock's article mentioned in note 25, *passim*.

against the word of the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord. But I have not sinned in any respect. But it so happens: the father's sin falls upon the son. Now upon me also my father's sin has fallen. But lo, I have confessed it before the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, and before the Gods, my lords (saying): "It is true, we have done it." And because I have confessed my father's sin, let the soul of the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, and (those) of the Gods, my lords, be again pacified! Suffer not do die the few who are still left to offer loaves and libations!" [90])

90) Cf. Cat. 279.2 — for which see note 26 — par. 9 on pp. 214-215 of Götze's text edition.

THE NOTIONS OF GOD IN THE ANCIENT CHINESE RELIGION

BY

JOSEPH SHIH

Pontificia Università Gregoriana Rome

It is a well known fact that in imperial China, the emperor was hailed as Son of Heaven. [1]) The explanation is less evident. According to the official version, this was because the emperor had received the Mandate of Heaven. This interpretation is based on a theory first expounded by the Duke of Chou, following the downfall of the Shang dynasty.

The Shang dynasty was the first dynasty in historical China. It is believed to have begun in 1766 B.C. In 1122 B.C., it was overthrown by King Wu who founded the succeeding Chou dynasty. The Duke of Chou was a brother of King Wu. After the latter's death, while his son, King Cheng, was still a minor, the Duke ruled the newly pacified country. It was during his regency that he stated this famous theory of the Mandate of Heaven. [2])

The notion of mandate was a familiar one. When a king appointed a subject to a certain office, he was said to give a mandate to that office. When he dismissed the official, it was said that he took away his mandate. The Duke applied this notion to the action of Heaven, who was believed to govern the whole world, and declared that, because the Shang kings had displeased Heaven with their wrong doing, Heaven had taken away His Mandate and had given it over to the Chou kings. [3]) Obviously the Duke promulgated this doctrine for the sake of justifying the Chou's conquest of China. However, from the vantage point of the history of religion, the story is of unique importance.

---

1) Heaven or *T'ien*, as we shall see, is a name of the Supreme God in China.

2) Homer H. Dubs made a close study of the history of the promulgation of this doctrine in his article "The Archaic Royal Jou Religion." (*T'oung Pao*, XLVI, 1958, pp. 217-257). Cfr. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (C.C.) vol. III, pp. 453-463.

3) *Ibid.* p. 231

It signalized indeed the beginning of the amalgamation of two concepts of a Supreme God that was to exercise a decisive influence on the further development of the religious thinking of the Chinese people. These two concepts were the *Ti* and *T'ien.*

The word *Ti* — which we shall translate as God-on-High —is found on the inscribed oracle bones rescued from the ruins of the Shang capital. [4]) There, *Ti* is said to command the rain, the wind, the thunder, the drought, and the harvest. To Him are attributed victories, defeats, disasters, illnesses, and death. Indeed, His will was consulted by kings and was revered as Supreme Law. [5]) Contrary to an opinion once prevalent, it is now established that the oracle bones do mention sacrifices to *Ti.* Of these the *ting* and *ti* are the most important ones. The former was held in the ancestral temple in honor of one's deceased father; the latter in the open country to ask for a good year. [6]) It is therefore generally assumed that *Ti,* or God-on-High, was worshipped by the Shang people as their Supreme God. [7])

The word *T'ien* is also found in the oracle records, but it does not refer to the Supreme God. [8]) The *T'ien,* as a name of a Supreme God, appeared first in the literature of the Chou period. There, *T'ien* is given anthropomorphic attributes. He is said to see, to hear, and to watch over all men. He is affected by men's doings. He is happy and angry with them. He blesses those who please Him and sends calamities upon those who offend Him. Though His ways are inscrutable, they are not arbitrary but always favorable to the virtuous, unfavorable to the wicked. *T'ien* is implored, is believed to be compassionate, ready to

---

4) The Shang kings used to consult the will of the Supreme God or their ancestors by means of a particular method of divination called *pu.* The materials used in this divination were either the under-shells of tortoise or shoulder bones of cattle, on which the subjects of the consultation were often incised. Tens of thousands of shells and bones of this sort have been found in the recent excavation of the ruins of the Shang Capital in the modern Hunan province. These shells and bones are commonly called oracle bones.

5) Kunio Shima, *A Study of Oracle letters from the Ruins of Yin's capital,* (Tokyo, Chiugokukai kenkiuhai, 1959. In Japanese language). Pp. 189-198. Cfr. Cheng Te-k'un, *Archaeology in China,* vol. 2: *Shang China,* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1960) p. 223.

6) Kunio Shima, *op. cit.* pp. 183-189; 212-216. Cfr. *Hsiao Ching* (The Book of Filial Piety) in *Sacred Books of the East* (S.B.E.) vol. 3 (Oxford, 1879) p. 476.

7) Cfr. Tu Erh-wei, *Studies about the Religions of Ancient China,* (Taipei, 1959. In Chinese) pp. 84-87.

8) Cheng Te-k'un, *op. cit.* p. 187.

satisfy the desires of men. On Him indeed depend both the life of each man and the dynasties of the country. [9]) *T'ien* is even invoked, together with *Ti*, as a tribute to a pretty girl: "How like *T'ien* she is; how like *Ti* she is!" [10]) Nathan Soederblom sees rightly in this verse a striking indication that *T'ien* is, as well as *Ti*, a personal God. [11]) *T'ien*, or Heaven, is the name of the Supreme God of the Chou people. [12])

The theory of the Mandate of Heaven supposes the unity of the Supreme God who gave His mandate successively to the Shang and Chou kings. Therefore, it goes without saying that, after their conquest of Shang China, the Chou rulers considered Heaven and God-on-High to be one and the same God. Nothing attests this belief better than the inscriptions on two similar bronze vessels, both of the early Chou period. On the one, the Mao-kung ting, it is stated: "The Great Heaven has found no displeasure but watches over and protects us." On the other, the Shih-yin ting, one reads instead: "The Great God-on-High has found no displeasure but watches over and protects us." [13]) The Chinese classics in general reveal also the same persuasion. [14])

However, this does not exclude the possibility that Heaven and God-on-High had been once two distinct deities. Indeed there are indications that invite us to believe in such an eventuality. The story of the impious Wu-i, for instance, is well known. Wu-i was a Shang king, apprehensive of Heaven's glory, whom he believed to be the Supreme God of a rival people. In order to keep up his spirits, he made an effigy of Heaven, feigned to fight with it, and then knocked it down. Again he hung a bag full of blood, shot upwards at it, and then boasted that he had wounded the Heavenly Spirit. [15]) On the other hand, to the Chou people, who came from the Western frontier of Shang China, God-on-High was first a foreign God who lived in the East. But, as they gradually gained strength, they came not only to challenge the

---

9) Bruno Schindler, "The development of Chinese conceptions of Supreme Beings," *Asia Major: Introductory Volume*, pp. 298-366.

10) Cfr. James Legge, C.C. vol. IV, p. 77.

11) Bruno Schindler, *op. cit.* pp. 299-300.

12) Tu Erh-wei, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-110.

13) Kunio Shima, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

14) Tien Tchen-kang, *L'idée de Dieu dans les huit premiers classiques Chinois*, (Thèse présenté à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université Fribourg-Suisse pour obtenir le grade de docteur, Fribourg, 1942).

15) James Legge. C.C., vol. III, p. 269.

Supremacy of the Shang rulers but even to envy them their Supreme God. This is seen in one of the "Odes of the kingdom," collected in the *Book of Poetry*. This ode sings the rise of the Chou royal house. It actually tells the story about how God-on-High, disappointed with the depravity of His people, came to dwell in the Western region and set up the house of Chou as His new representative on earth. [16]) So it is that, although the Chinese tradition in general believes in the unity of Heaven and God-on-High, the question has been raised as to the nature of this unity. It is indeed not impossible that the two had been once separate deities. If it had been so, how was it that they had come to be recognized as one single God?

Edouard Chavannes dealt with this question, though from a different point of view, in 1900 in his communication to the First International Congress of History of Religion. [17]) He arrived at the conclusion that neither Heaven nor God-on-High really meant Supreme God. Heaven, he contended, represented nature whereas God-on-High was nothing but a deified ancestor. At the basis of such a contention was the presumption that the ancient Chinese religion had developed from two distinct elements: the one animistic and the other naturalistic. The former showed itself in ancestor worship and the latter in the cult of the Spirit of the Soil. The construction of the ancestral hall and the erection of the altar to the Spirit of the Soil signaled indeed the constitution of a new state. [18]) Chavannes held that the Spirit of the Soil had been originally territorial deity and that his dignity had risen in direct proportion to the territorial expansion of the state. It is by this process that he attempted to explain how Heaven and God-on-High came to mean one divinity. Here are his words:

> But, with the progress of the power of the king, this particular cult slowly assumes a predominant importance. Religion develops parallel with politics. The Spirit of the Soil of the royal house was at first only one — though the most prominent one — among the innumerable Spirits of the Soil. Now he gradually extends his domain until he finally comes to symbolize the entire territory of the empire. So, one Spirit of the Soil, Hou-t'u, changes his identity and becomes the Sovereign Earth. In like manner, the Spirit of the Soil losses more and more the anthropomorphic qualities which once enabled

16) James Legge, C.C., vol. IV, pp. 448-455.

17) Edouard Chavannes, "Dieu du sol dans l'ancienne religion Chinoise," *Revue d'histoire des religions*, 1901, pp. 27-48.

18) *Ibid.*, pp. 46-48.

him to be considered as a God-on-High, the remote ancestor of the earthly kings, and grows to the full extent of the sky. He confused himself with Heaven. Heaven and God-on-High, who were once probably two distinct divinities, came to amalgamate with one another. And in their uneven combination, the attributes of Heaven encroached ever more upon those of God-on-High. August Heaven and Sovereign Earth: these are, after all, the two objects of the royal, and then the imperial cult. Thus, a naturalistic dualism, which includes the whole universe, imposes itself at the very moment when the sovereign himself claims to be the ruler of the world. [19])

Although his opinion can no longer be defended today, Chavannes did make two acute and pertinent observations. He pointed to the constant association of God-on-High with the ancestral worship on the one hand and that of Heaven with the cult of the Spirit of the Soil on the other. He insisted, moreover, on the role of the earth in the evolution of the religious conceptions in early China. We shall use these two observations as guide-lines in our study on the evolution of the notion of the Supreme God in the ancient Chinese religion. But to do so we must first correct his opinion about the origin of the notion of Hou-t'u, or the Sovereign Earth, with the help of two more recent studies. These are Berthold Laufer's *Jade: A study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion* [20]) and Carl Hentze's *Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religionen im ältesten China der Shang Zeit* (Bronze objects, cultic buildings, religion in the earliest China of Shang time). [21])

Laufer made a sharp distinction between the deity of Earth (*T'u* or *ti*) and the Spirit of the Soil (*she*). Basing his observations largely on Chavannes' study, he specified that the Spirit of the Soil is a male god of a partially anthropomorphic concept. It is a god restricted in power as to space and time, a god of territorial groups, of social communities, occupying a more or less limited area of soil. [22]) He gave a concise description of how the multitude of Spirits of the Soil were conceived in an organized body: "There is a complex system of an official hierarchy of a plurality of gods of the Soil graduated according to rank and power. The individual families harbor their God of Soil, the territorial communities have their own, the territorial officials have their own, and the feudal lords and the emperor have their own. The im-

19) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
20) Published in Chicago, 1912.
21) Published in Antwerpen, De Sikkel, 1951.
22) Laufer, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

perial God of Soil is, so to speak, the particular property of the dynasty, and His power vanishes with its extinction. The new rising dynasty chooses a new God of Soil of its own by erecting to him a new altar and neutralizes the action of his predecessor by building an enclosure around his altar." Hence Laufer concluded that the Spirits of the Soil were "individual gods of a local and temporary existence connected with the coeval living owners of the soil, living and dying with them." [22]) In contrast with the Spirits of the Soil, the deity of Earth was infinite in space and time. "It is an almighty great abstract deity like Heaven, and the object of veneration and worship on the part of the people and in particular of the emperor, through all generations. [23]) Laufer claimed that "It is the telluric deity whereas the Spirit of the Soil merely shares the function of a territorial tutelary genius." [24])

So far Laufer was perfectly right. The Spirit of the Soil and the deity of Earth differed indeed not only in seize but also, and above all, in their respective function. But he exaggerated his point when he went on to argue against Chavannes who thaught that the dualistic cult of Heaven and Earth had assumed its importance only since the time of the emporor Wu of the Han dynasty (141-87 B.C.). He saw very well the difference of function between the deity of Earth and the Spirit of the Soil, but he had overlooked the fact that the function of the earth itself had varied in the course of time. Though the sacrifice to the Earth had dated from time immemorial, the cult to the Earth, as a co-agent of Heaven in the production of the universe, was indeed of relatively late origin. It was Carl Hentze, undoubtedly the most authoritative interpreter of the ancient Chinese religion, who finally brought to light what both Chavannes and Laufer had failed to notice, in his monumental work which we have mentioned above.

Hentze called attention to a text of the *Book of History* which purports to record the instructions of a certain chief minister in the early Shang period, named I Yin, to the king T'ai Chia. The text is translated literally as follows: "I Yin composed a memorial for the king T'ai Chia, in which he stated: 'The former king kept his eye on the direction of the illustrious Spirit of Heaven. Thereby he served both what is up-above and what is down-below, namely the spirits of the Upper-

23) *Ibid.*, p. 145.
24) *Ibid.*, p. 145.

world and of the underworld as well as the Spirits of the Soil and Grain, and of the ancestral hall. Thus, there was none to whom he did not present his veneration." [25]) Among the spirits mentioned in the text one counts both the Spirit of the Underworld and the Spirit of the Soil. Hentze insisted emphatically in distinguishing these two species. Like Chavannes, he understood the latter to be a territorial deity (*Geist des Grund und Bodens*). He noted that it lived on the earth, staying, so to speak, "between two worlds, namely the Upperworld and the Underworld, yet belonging to none of them." The Spirit of the Underworld, on the other hand, as the Chinese name *ch'i* indicates, was the Spirit of one's native land and ancestral origin (*Erd- und Sippengeist*). [26]) It was related to the demon of the Underworld, represented by the animal mask (*t'ao-t'ieh*) which appears so frequently on the iconography of Shang China. The whole book of the *Bronzegerät* deals indeed with this subject.

In the light of these further studies, the observation of Chavannes, concerning the role of the earth in the evolution of the religious conception in early China, needs to be revised. First of all, it is no longer feasible to see in the Sovereign Earth a mere outgrowth of the Spirit of the Soil. It is necessary to distinguish their respective functions. Further, it had been established that, in the earliest China of Shang time, the function of the earth had been one of origin. Thus, we are now aware of the variety of functions which the earth played in the course of Chinese history. In earlier China, it was held successively as an origin, as a domain, and as a principle of creation. The Chinese language has coined three different words to indicate those three functions of the earth. These are *ch'i, she* and *ti*. Perhaps it is advisable to point out that these three words usually combine with other words to form definite expressions. Thus, *she* couples normally with *chi* to form the expression *she-chi* which means originally the Spirits of the Soil and of Grain, consequently, also the state. [27]) *Ti* contrasts with *T'ien*. *T'ien-ti* indicates either Heaven and earth or the universe as a whole. [28]) *Shen-ch'i* is an archaism. Hentze restored its meaning as

---

25) Hentze, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
26) *Ibid.*, pp. 98-104.
27) *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language*, vol. 23, p. 462, n. 119.
28) *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 291, n. 332.

the spirits of the Upper- and Underworld. *Ch'i* being the Spirit of the ancestral origin, is closely related to the clan. [29]) To those who are acquainted with the genius of the Chinese language, it is not at all surprising that these three expressions fall into a recognizable pattern, that is: *shen-ch'i — she-chi — T'ien-ti*, namely: clan — state — universe. It is indeed the aim of this study to show that this pattern corresponds not only to the process in the transformation of the political institutions during the succeeding Shang, Chou, and Ch'in-Han dynasties, but also to the evolution of the conception of the Supreme God during the same periods.

Viewed in this perspective, the question about the unity of the Supreme God in the ancient Chinese religion takes on a new significance. It no longer interests itself in knowing whether Heaven and God-on-High had been once two separate deities and how they had come to be recognized as one God. It seeks now to understand how, during those three stages of the formative period of their nation, the Chinese worshipped the Supreme God under various names, what were the concrete relations these names implied, and how were these names related to each other. Consequently, the present paper shall fall under three headings. The first one shall deal with the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.) when the earth was seen as the origin of all beings and was symbolized by the demon of the Underworld. Under that dynasty the Supreme God was called *Ti*, or God-on-High, and honored principally in relation to the royal ancestral worship. We like to describe Him as God of the fathers. The second part shall have to do with the Chou dynasty (1122-221 B.C.) when the earth was regarded as the domain of the king and was personified by the Spirit of the Soil. Under this dynasty, the Supreme God was named Heaven and honored as the prototype of the Chou king. This Supreme God may be best represented as the Heavenly king. The last part of this paper shall cover the Ch'in (221-206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 222) dynasties when the earth was believed to be an agent of creation and was hailed as the Sovereign Earth. It was then that the Supreme God of the Chinese came to be recognized formally as the Lord of the Universe.

---

29) Hentze, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

I. *Ti*, God-on-High, God of the Fathers

Shang is the first dynasty of historical China. It lasted from about 1766 to 1122 B.C. The Chinese tradition speaks of it in the following terms: "The Shang rulers feared the spirits and led the people to serve them. They were more eager to sacrifice to the dead than to hold court ceremonies, more prompt to inflict punishments than to give rewards." [30]) Whatever the justice of this remark, the recent excavations, at An-yang, in the ruins of the Shang capital, confirmed the belief that ancestral worship occupied the central place in the religion of the Shang people. [31]) It is only in relation to this cult that we can hope to understand their conception of the Supreme God.

The Shang ancestral worship was a complicated institution. To understand it correctly we must first clarify the question as to who were the Shang ancestors? The *Records of the Grand Historian of China* (*Shih-chi*) has registered a genealogy of the Shang kings. It begins with Ch'i. Ch'i is said to have been born miraculously. His mother became pregnant after swallowing a swallow's egg. In the same genealogy, Wei is listed in the eighth generation, Ta-yi in the fourtheenth, and Ti-hsin in the last. Ta-yi is the founder of the Shang dynasty. He is also called T'ang and Ch'eng. From Ta-yi to Ti-hsin there are eighteen generations and thirty kings. [32]) For centuries this was the only source of our knowledge about the Shang ancestors. But the recent discovery of the inscribed oracle bones in the ruins of the Shang capital has given us the opportunity of testing its validity. In fact, several serious studies have been undertaken and the result has been encouraging. While confirming in general the accuracy of the information provided by the Grand Historian, those studies have attested to the fact that only the ancestors from Wei onwards had ceremonial names and received regular sacrifices during the yearly cycles. Consequently it is believed that these alone were the real Shang royal ancestors. Among the names that stand above that of Wei, Hsiang-t'u and Chang-jo are not found in the oracle records. [33]) The rest — Ch'i, Chao-king,

30) *Li Chi* (*The Book of Rites*) ch. 32 *Piao chi* (The record on example). Cfr. James Legge, S.B.E. vol. 28, p. 342.

31) Eichhorn, W., „Zur Religion im ältesten China (Shang-zeit)," Wiener Zeitschrift für indische Philosophie, II (1958), pp. 33-53.

32) Cheng Tê-k'un, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219; 317.

33) I follow here the opinion of Prof. Kunio Shima.

Ch'ao-yu, Ming, and Chen — appear there to be more like spirits than human beings. They were referred to sometimes as *kao-tzu* (Higher Ancestors), other times as *wang* (Kings) or *tsung* (Ancestral Origin). Sacrificies were offered to them in the same manner as to natural deities, and rain and good years were begged of them. [34]) A question rises therefore: Who were these so-called Higher Ancestors? Prof. Kunio Shima thinks that they were the five genii worshipped in the *wu-ssu*, or the "five sacrifices." [35]) As objects of the "five sacrifices", the five genii belonged to an age, in which the function of the earth was no longer expressed in the form of the Demon of the Underworld. Hence their relation to the ancestral line could no longer be readily understood. However, since religious practices may outlive faith and old rites often receive new meanings, we may assume Prof. Kunio Shima's suggestion as being substantially correct.

The relation of the Higher Ancestors to the ancestral line may be better understood in the light of a legend concerning the origin of the house of Tsu Wen, who was the most famous chief minister in the state of Ch'u. This legend was told in the late Chou period. However, it should be noted that the state of Ch'u was located on the southern side of the Yangtzu River and, for this reason, was less influenced by the Chou culture. The legend has been translated by James Legge as follows:

> A certain Jo Ao took to his harem a daughter of the house of Yun, who bore to him Tou po-pi. On his father's death, this son followed his mother to Yun and was brought up there. He had an affair with a daughter of the viscount of Yun, the fruit of which was a son, afterwards styled Tzu Wen. This child's mother caused it to be thrown away in the marsh land of Mung. There a tigress suckled him. The viscount of Yu saw this when hunting, and returned home in terror. His wife then told him the whole story, and he sent for the child and had it cared for. The people of Ch'u called sucklings *ku* and tigers *wu-t'ou*. The child was therefore named *ku wu-t'ou*, and his mother was married to Po-pi. It grew up and subsequently became the chief minister of Ch'u, Tzu Wen. [36])

This story struck C. Hentze with its resemblance to the motif of the well known Yü bronze in the Sumimoto collection. [37]) Here a child is

---

34) Kunio Shima, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-247.
35) *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247.
36) James Legge, C.C. vol. V, p. 295.
37) Hentze, *op. cit.*, p. X.

indeed shown crouching in the open mouth of a tigress. In the one, as in the other case, Hentze recognized the myth of the creation of the first mortal man, namely the miraculous birth of the progenitor of a clan. It was his contention that the tigress in the two cases was nothing but an embodiment of the Demon of the Underworld. She represented therefore the Spirit of the native land and ancestral origin. [38]) This claim was substantiated with solid iconographical evidence. There is no reason for doubting its validity. Taken for granted this thesis, it is easy to establish the relation of the Higher Ancestors to the Shang royal ancestry. These were like the tigress but various embodiments of the same Demon of the Underworld. They represented the Spirit of the native land and ancestral origin of the Shang royal house.

Though the Higher Ancestors are not ancestors in the biological sense of the word it is through them that we are to learn about the nature of the Shang ancestral worship. This may seem paradoxical. But we must keep in mind that, in early China, only the aristocracy erected temples to their ancestors. The common people, who were said to have no ancestors, were not entitled to do so. [39]) According to an ancient Chinese tradition, this was because only the aristocracy bore the clan names which warranted their descent from the ancient sage kings who were supposed to have been born miraculously through the divine influence upon their mother. [40]) Indeed, it is this belief, witnessed in both the mythology and iconography of Shang China, that was the theme celebrated in the Shang ancestral worship.

The belief in the miraculous birth of the progenitor of the king's clan in Shang China is rooted in a particular cosmogonic conception which C. Hentze has restored in his monograph entitled: *Tod, Auferstehung, Weltordnung* (*Death, Resurrection, World Order*). In this study, Hentze calls attention to an iconographical detail found on a number of sacrificial vessels of Shang period. Where it is found it is seen on the forehead of the animal mask. It is the ideogram *kung*. With two hands opposed to each other and a piece of jade placed in the middle of

38) *Ibid.*, p. 114.

39) *Li chi*, ch. 23 *chi fa* (The law of sacrifices). Cfr. James Legge, S.B.E. vol. 28, p. 206.

40) *Shuo Wen*, a basic Chinese etymological dictionary, gives the following explanation of the word *hsing* (family name): "*Hsing* indicates the origin of a person. It is written with the sign *nü* (woman) because in old times the holy man were born through Heaven's direct influence on their mothers."

them, the word implies oblation or sacrifice. But since it is written on the forehead of a divinity, it is to be expected that it hides a certain esoteric signification which Hentze has deciphered. He sees in the jade, that stands between the two hands, the sketch of a compound of two houses of the dead, the one with its upside up and the other with its upside down. He thinks that it is a sort of magical wheel. With the house of the dead now set upside up and now hang upside down, it signifies the cyclical movement of the eternal return. At the same time it symbolizes the totality of the universe which includes both the world of the living and that of the dead. [41]) It is evident that similar symbolism implies the belief that the underworld is not only the abode of the dead but also the well-spring of life. Of this belief the Demon of the Underworld with its two mouths, the one devours and the other spits, is indeed but a dramatic representation.

So far we have distinguished the real royal ancestors from the so-called Higher Ancestors. We have defined the true meaning of the Shang ancestral worship and have discovered the cosmogonic conception that underlaid it. Now, we may broach safely the main subject of our study, namely the relation between God-on-High and the Shang royal ancestors. Let us first state our question.

The twentieth chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Li-chi*), bearing the title *chi-fa*, purports to relate the ancient rules of sacrifices. The accuracy of its information remains in doubt. Nevertheless, it represents the view of one of the schools of liturgical studies in the early Han period. This school enumerated four types of sacrifices; *ti, chiao, tsu, tsung.* Whereas *tsu* and *tsung* were offered to the ancestors, *ti* and *chiao* were properly speaking, sacrifices to the Supreme God. However, certain ancestors of particular merit might be invited to take part as associates to the Supreme God. Dealing with the sacrifices in Shang times, the chapter states: "The Shang kings offered the *ti* sacrifice to k'u, the *chiao* sacrifice to Ming, the *tsu* sacrifice to Ch'i, and the *tsung* sacrifice to Tang." [42]) Of the four persons mentioned as receiving the four types of sacrifices three are known to us. Indeed T'ang was the founder of the Shang dynasty. Ming was one of the five Higher An-

41) In *Le Symbolisme cosmique des monuments religieux* (Serie Orientale Roma XIV, Roma, Is M.E.O. 1957) pp. 91-117.

42) *Li chi,* ch. 23 *chi fa* (The law of sacrifices). Cfr. James Legge, S.B.E. vol. 28, p. 202.

cestors; so too was Ch'i, only he was generally taken as the progenitor of the Shang royal clan. The only person unfamiliar to us is k'u, to whom was attributed the most solemn *ti* sacrifice. A Han commentator of the early Chinese philosophical writings once observed: "The Great k'u is an ancestor. He is also known as God-on-High." [43]) This remark seems to support the opinion of Chavannes who saw in God-on-High a glorified Shang ancestor. But is God-on-High really a deified ancestor? This is the question we want to examine.

Since the answer to this question depends on the identity of the Great K'u our task consists essentially in comparing the various traditions concerning that person. Now the sacrificial odes of the Shang house sang of its glorious origin in the following words: "Heaven bade the dark bird to come down and bear the Shang." [44]) This verse has provoked diverse commentaries. The commentator Mao, being a Confucianist, gave a rather demythologized interpretation. As he understood it, Chien-ti, the mother of Ch'i, was a lady belonging to the harem of the ancient emperor k'u. She accompanied the emperor at the time of the vernal equinox to sacrifice and prayed to the first Match-maker (kao-mei), [45]) and the result was the birth of Ch'i, who was believed to be the progenitor of the Shang clan. [46]) This interpretation contradicts itself and can not be taken seriously. The Grand Historian, Ssuma Chien, seems to be more consistent. He, too, considered K'u to be Chien-ti's husband. But he understood the conception of Ch'i as miraculous. According to him the mother was bathing in open air when a swallow made its appearance and dropped an egg. She took it and swallowed it, and became the mother of the Shang royal clan. [47]) It is interesting to note that in both versions K'u was pictured like a human being and played relatively an unimportant role. If, then, he received the most solemn *ti* sacrifice, the fact is not to be attributed to the miraculous birth of Ch'i.

The same Ssu-ma Chien recorded another tradition about K'u in the chapter on the marvelous deeds and reigns of the "Fibe Emperors," with which he began his account of early Chinese history. Today no

---

43) Kao Yu's commentary on the *Book of Huai-nan tzu*, ch. 13.
44) James Legge, C.C., vol. IV, p. 636.
45) James Legge, S.B.E., vol. 27, p. 259.
46) James Legge, C.C., IV, p. 636 note.
47) *Ibid.*, p. 636 note.

one believes that the Five Emperors were historical persons. Even the story of succession of the two last Emperors, Yao and Shun, which had exercised so great an influence in the formation of political thought in ancient China, proves to be a myth. Prof. Tu Er-wei contends that it describes in fact the succession of the new moon to the old. Indeed, Yao is said to have reigned twenty eight years, a number which corresponds to that of the days of the phases of the moon in the sky. Moreover, like the new moon, Shun succeeded Yao three years (days) after the latter's death.[48]) K'u is mentioned, after the Yellow Emperor and Chüan-hsü, as the third of the Five Emperors. He, too, must be a moon-god, for he is said to have been intelligent and to have announced his own name as soon as he was born. His name was the same as that of the stone who was a good archer. The latter appears in ancient Chinese literature as a heavenly god. Prof. Tu takes him to be a moon-god. Both the stone and bow, he argued, refer normally to the moon.[49])

Now, in the cosmogony of Shang China, the moon and the underworld are mutually convertible, for it is through the moon that the secret of the Underworld has been revealed. Indeed, the moon waxes and wanes. When waxing, she resembles in shape a multitude of thing: she is hailed for calling all things into existence. When she is on the wane, the sphere of being diminishes: she is heared because she swallows things up. But when the new moon reappears, the multitude of things come again into being: she is then believed to spit out what she has swallowed. Thus, like the Underworld, the moon is both creator and annihilator, both saviour and destroyer, both the fountain of life and the abode of the dead. The Demon of the Underworld has a pair of horns in the form of mushrooms which represent moon houses.[50]) It is the personification of the lunar as well as telluric hierophanies.

Considering, therefore, the cosmogonic conception, that underlaid the Shang religious institution, we should not find it surprising that God-on-High was confused with a moon-god and was consequently taken for a Higher Ancestor. Rather we should expect that He would have been considered not only as a moon-god but also as a deity of Earth.

---

48) *The Religious system of Ancient China: Studies of the God Dao, Ti and Hou-t'u* (Taipei, 1960), p. 90 (in Chinese).

49) *Ibid.*, p. 88.

50) Hentze, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-97.

Such indeed was exactly the case. An instance may be cited from the *Book of Changes* where God-on-High is said to "come forth in the sign of arousing." At the first reading, one may think only of his relation to the spring thunder. But the context says more. Thunder is heard when sacrifices are being offered at the ancestral temple and at the altar of Earth. [51]) Another instance is more explicit. It is found in a hymn bearing the title "the coming of God-on-High," sung during the Han dynasty on the occasion of the suburban sacrifice in spring. The words sound:

I. God-on-High descends on the central altar;
All the spirits wait on him along the four sides.
Let us rectify our intentions,
To be worthy of the scene.

The universe rests in perfect harmony;
Every thing follows the way of nature.
Within the four seas, peace and tranquility prevail,
The civil laws are kept in force,
But the military expeditions are not persued.

The Sovereign Earth is a wealthy Goddess;
Her light illuminates the three luminous bodies.
She looks well at ease
In her beautiful yellow garment.

II. As the spring bursts forth,
It stirs the roots of plants.
Its unction extends to all,
Touching even insects and worms.

For as the spring thunder sounds,
Plants regain their vigour;
Torpid insects lend their ears.
And nature thus revived
Goes on to fulfil its fate.

Everyone is now happy
Even children and babies.
All living beings enjoy themselves,
Thanks to the benediction of spring. [52])

---

51) Wilhelm-Baynes (tr.), *The I Ching* (The Book of Changes, Bollingen Serie XIX, New York, 1950) vol. 2, pp. 296-301.

52) Pan Ku, *Han Shu* (History of Han Dynasty), vol 22 "The Treatise on Rites and Music," ff. 17-18 (in Chinese).

Emblems *(hsiang)* and the four Emblems produced the eight Trigrams (*kua*)." [78]) The way all things derive from the eight Trigrams is illustrated as follows:

> *Ch'ien* is Heaven and hence is called father.
> *K'un* is earth and hence is called mother.
> *Chen* by its first line is male and so is called the first son.
> *Sun* by its first line is female and so is called the first daughter.
> *K'an* by its second line is male and so is called the second son.
> *Li* by its second line is female and so is called the second daughter.
> *Ken* by its third line is male and so is called the third son.
> *Tui* by its third line is female and so is called the third daughter. [79])

Applied to the natural phenomena, *Chen* becomes thunder, *Sun* becomes rain, *k'an* becomes water, *Li* becomes fire, *Ken* becomes mountain, and *Tui* becomes marsh. To express these diagrammatic representations in mythical form, one should say that all things are produced by God Fu-hsi and his sister Goddess Nü-ho. [80]) But, like the *Book of Lao-tzu*, the *Appendices* seek to demythologize the ancient Chinese cosmogony. They abound indeed in such abstract utterances as: "Vast is *Ch'ien*, the beginner, all things owe to it their beginning. It comprises Heaven." "Perfect is *K'un*, the beginner! All things owe to it their birth. It receives obediently the influence of Heaven." [81]) It is interesting to compare these statements to that of Lao Tzu: "The term Non-being indicates the beginning of heaven and earth; the term Being indicates the mother of the ten thousand things." By this comparison, we shall see both the similarity between the two cosmogonic teachings and their difference from each other, realizing thus the specific nature of the *Yin-yang* teaching.

The similarity between the two teachings consists in the distinction of the two categories: Non-being (*wu*) and Being (*yü*) on the one hand, on the other hand *Ch'ien* and *k'un*. Their difference is found in the order, in which the two categories are arranged in the two schools. According to Lao Tzu, Being is born out of Non-being. The primacy belongs therefore to the latter. In the *Appendices*, though *Ch'ien* and

78) Cited according Fung Yu-lang's *History of Chinese Philosophy*, translated by D. Bodde, vol. I (Princeton, 1951), p. 384.
79) *Ibid.*, p. 382.
80) Tu Erh-wei. *Discovery of the Original Meaning of the I Ching* (Taipei, 1961) p. 19 (in Chinese).
81) Cited according to Fung Yu lang's *History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 385.

k'un are two co-ordinated agents of creation, *Ch'ien* is said to "comprise Heaven" while *K'un* is said to "Receive obediently the influence of Heaven." The primacy is attributed rather to the former. The full significance of this distinction will appear if we bear in mind that both the *Book of Lao tzu* and the *Book of Changes* ultimately derived from the moon mythology in which *Yin* excels *yang*. The Non-being, being equivalent to *Yin*, rightly holds the primacy. But *Ch'ien* is a synonym of *Yang*; how does it exceed *K'un* which is a synonym of *Yin?*

The answer to this question should lead us to understand the proper nature of the *Yin-yang* teaching. Indeed, it is true that the Yin-yang theory, as well as Taoism, ultimately derived from the mythology of earliest China. But the use of mythological materials varied in the two cases. In Taoism, ancient myths were restated simply in contemporary language. Its aim was simply to reveal the way of nature and to invite men to follow it. Hence there was no need of reversing the order of *Yin* and *Yang*. In the *Yin-Yang* school, the handling of ancient myths became more complicated. It involved the adaptation of the original intentions to the exigencies of the existing social order, because its aim was to justify and sanction the actual laws by showing their conformity to nature. [82]) Now, in the Chinese society the king, the father, and the husband held a higher position respectively in regard to the minister, the son, and the wife. Hence it was necessary that *Ch'ien*, which symbolized the former, should exceed *k'un*, which symbolized the latter: [83]) This was how the order of *Yin* and *Yang* came to be reversed.

The *Yin-yang* theory was, therefore, an instance of syncretism: not only in so far as it blended the Shang and Chou cosmoginies by claiming that both heaven and earth were the principles of creation, but also in so far as it harmonized the Taoist and Confucian views on the respect-

---

82) This is stated in the *Appendices* as follows: "Heaven is high, the earth is low. Thus *Ch'ien* and *k'un* are determined. In correspondance with the difference between low and high, inferior and superior places are established." cfr. Wilhelm-Baynes, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

83) This is illustrated in the *Appendices* as follows: "The *K'un* possesses beauty but veils it. So must a man be when entering the service of a king. He must avoid laying claim to the completed work. This is the way of the earth, the way of the wife, the way of the one who serves. It is the way of the earth to make no display of completed work but rather bring everything to completion vicariously." Ibid., p. 28.

ive merit of nature and culture. Lao Tzu exalted nature. Confucius cherished the traditions of the sage kings. The *Yin-yang* school sought to demonstrate how the traditions of the sage kings conformed to nature and were sanctioned by it.

As to the Five Agents theory, unfortunately we have but a faint knowledge of it today. The Grand Historian, Ssu-ma Chien, attributes its spread to the philosopher Tsou Yen (about 305-240 B.C.), and summarizes its tenets in a few lines. On account of the scarcity of pertinent information, we shall reproduce here his text and give it an accurate interpretation.

> Tsou Yen cited facts to prove that ever since the seperation of heaven and earth the virtues of the Five Agents had been in rotation. He showed how the dynasties in the past had agreed respectively with the virtues of the corresponding Agents, and how the portents that had been given had been really realized. [84])

Tsou Yen taught that the events in the human world were influenced by the rotation of the Five Agents, which are: Water, Wood, Metal, Fire, and Earth. Each Agent took its turn to dominate over all the others. As to the order of succession, he said that "each Agent was followed by the one that defeated it." Accordingly, "wood was followed by Metal, Metal by Fire, and Fire by Water." [85]) Each time when one Agent came to prevail, it called up a new dynasty that was to rule by the special virtue of the Agent. Since the succession of one Agent to another was believed to be announced generally by certain portents, it was very important for the rulers, who were engaged in contending for the supremacy, to detect the portents and to conform their institutions to the proper virtue of the Agent that was supposed to prevail.

Though different from each other originally, the *Yin-yang* and Five Agents theories did have a certain affinity between them. It was therefore not a pure accident that they came to be considered as teachings of one single school. A fundamental principle, that underlaid both these theories, is known as *T'ien-jen ho-i*, which means "perfect correspondence between what happens in nature and what happens to men."

---

84) *Shih Chi* (*Ricord of History*) ch. 74 "Biographies of Men Ko and Hsün Ching."

85) Cited according Fung Yu-lang's *Chung Kuo che-hsüeh-shih hsin-pien* (revised edition of the history of the Chinese philosophy) Peking, 1963, p. 452.

To some extent, this principle is congenial to the Chinese mentality. It was operative in Taoism and Confucianism as well. Speaking of the conduct of a sage king, Confucius, for example, used the following illustration: "He who exercises government by means of virtue may be compared to the pole-star, which keeps its place while all the other stars turn around it." [86]) The particular merit (or demerit) of the *Yin-yang* and Five Agents school consisted rather in constructing a series of models to foster just such a process of thinking.

These models were built upon an astronomical chart, which represents the twenty-eight lunar mansions (*hsü*) along the celestial equator. It corresponds roughly to a European Chart of the constellations and stars of the northern hemisphere. Taken in its broadest lines, it may be pictured as two circles, one outside the other, having the same pole as their center. The inner circle covers the circumpolar area. [87]) The outer circumference represents the celestial equator. The zone between the inner and outer circumferences is divided into four quadrants. These are also called the four palaces, namely the four palaces where the sun sojourns successively in the course of the four seasons. In contrast to these four palaces, the area within the inner circle is known as the central palace.

The chief operation of the *Yin-yang* and Five Agents school was to extend the cardinal point system of the terrestial horizon to the celestial equator. Not suspecting the obliquity of the ecliptic, the ancient Chinese were unaware of the longitudinal movement of the sun. Their determination of the four celestial cardinal points was based on principles that were purely conventional. [88]) Noting that in winter the night was longer than the day, they thought that the *Yin* prevailed then over the *Yang*. Hence they deduced that the sun must be at the North. Accord-

---

86) James Legge, C.C., Vol. I, p. 145.

87) Unlike the ancient Greek who determined the positions of the sun in the sky through the observation of heliacal risings and settings on the horizon, the ancient Chinese did it through the observation of culmination of the circumpolar stars. The pole was thus the fundamental basis of Chinese astronomy. Cfr. Joseph Needham, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

88) The ancient Greek explained the alternation of the seasons by the meteorological cause. They believed that the wind of the North and the wind of the South chased the sun to the African and European sides, like a ballon sailing back and forth along the alternating currents of air. For them therefore, the characteristic of he winter is that the sun is at the south.

ingly, the quadrant, where the winter solstice takes place, was named the Northern or Winter palace. And the opposite quadrant was called the Southern or Summer palace. Following the same reasoning, one should expect that the Western palace, where the spring equinox takes place, would have been called Spring palace. But it was not so. The Western palace was known as Autumn palace. Instead the Eastern palace was called Spring palace. This incoherence is alluded to in the following passage of the *Book of Chou Rites* (*Chou-li*): "In the winter and the summer one directs himself to the sun, in the spring and autumn one directs himself to the moon in order to determine the order of the four seasons." [89])

With heaven and earth thus coinciding with one another, it is easy to distribute the Five Agents into the Five Celestial Palaces. Wood should grow in the Spring Palace; Fire should burn in the Summer Palace. Let metal be deposited in the Autumn Palace and Water reserved in the Winter Palace. Earth must remain in the Central Palace. The colour of earth is yellow. It was the colour of the Chinese emperor. Indeed, the territory of China corresponded to the Central Palace, whereas all the other countries occupied regions which corresponded to one of the four other Palaces. [90]) But the real interest of such constructions derived from the fact that the heavens moved in cycles. There were daily cycles, monthly cycles, yearly cycles, and most formidable of all, dynastic cycles. It was the apprehension of the dynastic cycles that was the cause for the success of the *Yin-yang* school in Ch'in-Han times.

From our point of view, the most interesting thing about these constructions are, of course, not that they illustrated the principle of "the perfect correspondence between what happens in nature and what happens to men," but that they show the amalgamation of the two systems of religious symbolisms which Heaven and Tao had once embodied. Indeed, with the coalition of heaven and earth, the Underworld was, so to speak, transferred up to heaven. Consequently, dragon, tiger, bird, and tortoise, which had been shaped by the waxing moon to reveal the mysteries of the Underworld, were then plastered on the vault of Heaven and were even identified with individual con-

89) Biot, Ed. (tr.), Tcheou-li (*The Rites of Chou*), Paris, reprint 1939) vol. 2, p. 113 (according to first edition).

90) L. de Saussure, *Les Origines de l'astronomie chinoise*, Paris, 1930, p. 159.

stellations. [91]) Thus, instead of the moon and sky, that had inspired the religious institutions of Shang and Chou China, the stars brightened and directed the rulers of the Ch'in Han dynasties to create a new form of religion, of which the *Yin-yang* and Five Agents theories were to be the official theology.

An immediate effect of this new theology on the conception of the Supreme God was the quintuplication of God-on-High. Each of the Five Gods-on-High were said to command the virtues of one of the Five Agents. The Yellow One commands the virtue of Earth; the Green One the virtue of Wood; the Red One the virtue of Fire; the White One the virtue of Metal; and the Black One the virtue of Water. They took turns to prevail one over the other according to the principle of the "mutual production and succession" of the Five Agents. When one of them came to his turn to prevail, he adopted a man as his son and gave to him the mandate to rule the world. As such, he was worshipped at the suburban sacrifice and received the honor that had been formerly reserved for Heaven and God-on-High. Thus, according to one dynastic legend, Kao-tzu, the founder of the Han dynasty, once dreamed of killing a great snake. On that occasion he was informed by a spirit that the snake was the son of the White God-on-High and that he who had killed it, was the son of the Red God-on-High. [92]) But in another dynastic legend, the same Kao-tzu is said to have been the son of the Black God-on-High to whom he erected the Northern Sacred Palace. [93]) The Historian Pan K'u (32-92 A.D.) remarked, indeed, that the Han emperors had hesitated for several generations about the virtue by which they had obtained the mandate to rule. When they finally reached the decision, their choice was the virtue of Fire. Consequently, Red was adopted as the colour of the Han dynasty. [94])

It is evident that such a conception of the Supreme God had great inconveniences; for the Five Agents were applied not only to the succession of time but also to the extension of space. For this reason,

---

91) Gustave Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise*, Leiden, 1875, Book I, chapter 1.
92) Burton Watson (tr.), *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, (New York, 1961), vol. I, p. 80.
93) *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 31.
94) Pan Ku, *Han Shu*, ch. 25 "The treatise on the suburban sacrifices," part 2, ff. 13-14.

the Five Gods-on-High ruled not only successively according to the order of the Five Agents whose virtue they commanded, but also simultaneously each one in the region where the virtue of his Agent was believed to dominate. Thus, the Yellow God-on-High ruled in the Central Palace; the Green God-on-High in the Eastern Palace, the Red God-on-High in the Southern Palace; the White God-on-High in the Western Palace; and the Black God-on-High in the Northern Palace. This led inevitably to the practices of offering sacrifices to all Five Gods-on-High at separate Sacred Palaces.[95]) These were strongly objected to by some Confucian officials as incompatible with the tradition of the sage kings.

To remedy the abuses a restoration of the pristine Suburban sacrifice was undertaken. This happened during the reign of the emperor Cheng (the 9th ruler of the dynasty) at the recommendation of his Confucian minister K'ung Hen. But what was restored then, was no longer a single sacrifice to Heaven as the Heavenly King; it was actually a double sacrifice to both Heaven and Earth as two co-ordinated agents of creation. Here too the influence of the new theology must be active. We read indeed from the memorial of K'uang Hen such an explanation: "The sage kings did not institute the ceremonies of the Suburban sacrifices casually; the sacrifice to Heaven is to be held at the Southern suburb. Its purpose is to conform to the *Yang* principle. The sacrifice to Earth is to be held at the Northern suburb. Its purpose is to symbolize the *Yin* principle."[96]) Similar conceptions are also found in the hymns sung at the Han Suburban sacrifices. Here is but one example:

> Hail the Supreme Principle.
> Hail the most venerable Goddess
> You govern heaven and earth
> Form the four seasons
> Regulate the sun and moon
> Moderate the constellations and stars
> And turn round and round
> The *Yin-yang* and Five Agents.[97])

A final and lasting effect of the *Yin-yang* theory on the conception of the Supreme God was the exaltation of God *T'ai-i*. *Tai-i* means the

95) H. H. Dubs, *art. cit.*, pp. 255-256.
96) Pan Ku, *Han Shu*, ch. 25, part 2, f. 9.
97) *Ibid.*, ch. 22 "The treatise on rites and musics," f. 19.

Great One. It had been a name of Tao. [98]) As such, it had designated a moon-god. [99]) The cult of God *T'ai-i* had something to do with the pursuit of immortality. It was probably for that purpose that Emperor Wu had been a devotee of this cult. [100]) But viewed through the models of the *Yin-yang* school, God *T'ai-i* came to be visualized by the pole-star. Consequently, he was believed to reside above the pivot of the celestial vault and to act before the separation of heaven and earth. [101]) It was then that he was recognized as "the greatest among all heavenly gods," and that the Five Gods-on-High were said to be "no more than the helpers of the Great One." [102]) It is interesting to note that before the official institution of the double suburban sacrifice, the sacrifice to God *T'ai-i* was often coupled with the sacrifice to Sovereign Earth. After the institution of the double suburban sacrifice, His name was still invoked in a hymn addressed to Heaven and Earth as One who was supposed to enjoy the Suburban sacrifice:

> Dressed in variegated silk,
> A thousand boys and girls
> Dance in eight ranks
> to delight God *T'ai-i*. [103])

All these indicate that in the Han religion God *T'ai-* is effectively installed on the throne of the Supreme God, left vacant through the quintuplication of God-on-High and the de-personification of Heaven.

IV. The Moon, the Sky, and the Pole-star

To believe in the Supreme God is one thing; another thing is to conceive of Him in a way consistent with one's way of living and thinking. In the pages, that precede, we have shown how the Chinese people had believed in the Supreme God from the very beginning of their history. But their way of conceiving of Him varied throughout the formative period of their nation.

---

98) "Tao is something that is extremely fine. It can not be seen described nor named. If one insists nevertheless in doing so, he may call it *Tai i* (the Great One)." Cited from *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* (*The Spring and Autumn of Sir Lü Pu-wei*), Bk 5, chap. 2: *ta-yüeh pien* (chapter on the great musics).

99) Pan Ku, *Han Shu*, ch. 22, f. 19.

100) Burton Watson, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 50-54.

101) Hsü Ti-shan, "Tao-chia ssu-hsiang yü Tao-chiao," (The philosophical and religious Taoism), *Yen Ching Journal* (1927), n. 2, p. 280.

102) Burton Watson, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 50.

103) Pan Ku, *Han Shu*, ch. 22, f. 19.

Under the Shang dynasty, the government of China was rudimentary. It was essentially a clan organization. The life of the people centered then around the ancestral temple. The ancestor worship formed indeed the core of their religion and fashioned their views on God, nature and men, as is evident from their iconography and mythology, in which the moon occupied a pre-eminent place. It was quite natural that God-on-High, their Supreme God, came to be visualized through the moon and was somewhat shadowed by it.

The government of Chou China was erected from the federation of several tribal communities, cemented by their common belief in the Supreme God whom they hailed as Heaven. Compared with God-on-High, Heaven was more active in the events of the nation and less bound to the cycle of the seasons. His will was, therefore, more conscientiously respected. Like God-on-High, He was the lord of nature but, as a prototype of the Chou kings, He was honored above all as the guardian of the moral order, that is, the founder and defender of the Chinese civilization.

The rulers of Ch'in-Han dynasties arrogated to themselves the title of emperor (*huang-ti*) which differed significantly from that of king (*wang*). A king ruled over a society; he was the guardian of a particular civilization. An emperor governed the whole world; he was responsible not only for civilization but also for creation. The Chinese saying "dew in spring and frost in autumn are nothing but benefits from the emperor" betrays exactly this belief. Hence it is evident that the Supreme God of the Ch'in-Han religion must be the sole universal Lord of the universe. The Five Gods-on-High and the couple Heaven and Earth, were but poor substitutes. They were, more properly speaking, symptoms of a religious metamorphosis and heralds of a coming God — God *T'ai-i* who, with the pole-star as His image, did appear to be endowed with the necessary qualifications to hold this highest dignity.

The moon, the sky, and the pole-star: these were, therefore, the three symbols of the Supreme God used in the ancient Chinese religion. They had been adopted successively and had prevailed one after the other: the moon in the Shang dynasty, the sky in the Chou dynasty, and the pole-star in the Han dynasty. However, a religious symbol dies hard. Once introduced it tends to stay indefinitely and to revive in many guises. Thus, under the Chou dynasty when Heaven had been exalted

as the Supreme God, God-on-High remained unchanged. It is true that the two were then formally recognized as being one and the same deity. Still, on certain occasions they received distinct sacrifices. Again, under the Han dynasty, sacrifices were offered separately to the Five Gods-on-High, to Heaven and Earth, and to God *T'ai-i*. Yet, at the same time these sacrifices were indifferently identified as sacrifices to Heaven or to God-on-High. Confronted with such evidences, our previous statement ought to be modified. The three symbols of the Supreme God had been adopted successively — but once adopted they were used simultaneously. They had prevailed one after the other — but only to the extent that the predominance of the one did not exclude the continual existence of the other. In other words, the moon, the sky, and the pole-star had been introduced successively into the ancient Chinese religion as the symbols of the Supreme God. But once introduced they remained and continued to symbolize one and the same Supreme God.

But the simultaneous use of several different symbols of the Supreme God poses a serious theological problem which can not be dismissed simply by stating that some of these symbols are "survivals" of earlier forms of religion; for, as E. O. James has observed, "survivals" have survived because there are reasons for their continual existence. [104]) Hence, questions are to be raised as to why God-on-High had persisted under the Chou dynasty and why both Heaven and God-on-High had persisted under the Han dynasty. For reasons that shall become clear to us latter one, we shall consider the two questions separately.

It seems that there were two reasons for the continual existence of God-on-High in Chou times. The one derived from the nature of the symbolism itself. Owing to the analogy with the moon, God-on-High represented a Supreme God that had revealed Himself particularly as a fertility god. As such, he was more aptly invoked in such occasions as those of asking for good years and posterity; for Heaven, on the other hand, being the prototype of the Chou king, was above all the guardian of the moral order. Chavannes' observation of the constant association between the ancestors and God-on-High was therefore very

---

104) *History of Religion* [2], (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1964) p. 206.

Indeed, the Five Gods-on-High were an effect of the *Yin-yang* and Five Agents theory which had appealed to the Ch'in-Han rulers chiefly owing to its teaching on the dynastical cycles. Now this teaching consisted essentially in two notions that purported to define the relation of a secular ruler to the Heavenly God. These were *kan-sheng* and *sheu-ming*, namely "to be born though the miraculous influence of God" and "to receive the mandate to rule." It is not difficult to recognize that these were precisely what the Shang and Chou kings had claimed for themselves with regard to God-on-High and Heaven. Hence it may be concluded that the Five Gods-on-High fulfilled exactly the same function in the Han religion as God-on-High and Heaven had done in the Shang and Chou times. In other words, they were a Han version of God-on-High and Heaven.

Compared to the original, the new version had one obvious advantage. It was a more comprehensive notion which embodied in itself both the telluric and uranic symbolisms. Thus, unlike Heaven and God-on-High who, though identified with each other, represented however asunder two distinct functions of the Supreme God, the Five Gods-on-High were endowed with necessary qualities both as a fertility God and the guardian of the moral order. Presumably this had a certain part in their ousting of the already fading figures of Heaven and God-on-High.

But the new version had also serious drawbacks. We have shown how it had led to the separate sacrifices of all Five Gods-on-High, thus compromising the belief in the unity of the Supreme God. Still, that was a relatively less important defect, for it had been somehow remedied by degrading the Five Gods-on-High to the rank of demiurges and exalting God *T'ai-i* to the dignity of the One Supreme God. The really disastrous drawback of this notion was its distortion of the meaning of the Mandate of Heaven. As first propounded by the Duke of Chou, the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven did have a propagandistic purpose. But that did not prevent it from deriving its content from a genuine religious experience. In fact, it taught that Heaven was not bound to any particular family. He could give His Mandate to the family, which pleased Him by the virtues of its members, and take it away from the same family whenever it incurred His displeasure. It is easy to recognize that this doctrine is based on the belief in the absolute dominion of the Supreme God revealed through the

hierophanies of the sky.[107]) In the *Yin-yang* and Five Agents school, however, the Mandate of Heaven was understood otherwise. It was no longer conceived as the expression of a free will but the inexorable consequence of the rotation of the Five Agents, visible in the regular motions of the heavenly bodies. The Five Gods-on-High, whose own supremacy depended on the outcome of such rotation, had of course no say in this matter. But even God *T'ai-i* would not interfere with this process; for, like the pole-star, He belonged to the world of the motionless and was supposed to govern by non-action.

Thus, the successive rise of the moon, the sky, and the polestar as the symbol of the Supreme God and their simultaneous use in the ancient Chinese religion have introduced us to the mystery of the names of God. We shall illustrate some aspects of this complicated subject by discussing a few examples mentioned above.

Men did not create God. Nor, properly speaking, did they create the notions of God which were prompted in them by whatever of the divine they found within and without themselves. But once a notion of God had been formed, it would be communicated to different persons and handed down from one generation to another. To be understood and accepted, it would have to be interpreted, illustrated, reconstructed, adapted ... occasionally it would be even falsified so that not all notions of God had the same value. They had to be judged individually each one according to its own merits, above all, its truth, relevancy, and adequacy.

We tend generally to judge the truth of a notion by comparing it with a similar one which is more familiar to us. To the Christians, for example, the notion of Heaven seems to be true whereas that of the Five Gods-on-High is evidently false, for the former is compatible with the Christian conception of God whereas the latter is contradicted by it. Asked as to how they know that their notion of God is a true one, the Christians would not hesitate to answer that it is because it agrees with the Revelation given in Jesus-Christ. To a certain extent this answer is valid for all religions. Also in the Chinese religion, a notion of God is true so long it derives ultimately from a genuine apprehension of the divine and remains faithful to its content. Judged by this norm, the notion of Heaven, as appears in the doctrine of

---

107) Cfr. Mirca Eliade *Le sacré et le profane* (Collection idées, Paris, Gallimard, 1965) pp. 100-101.

the Mandate of Heaven propounded by the Duke of Chou, is a true notion of God, for it does derive from the genuine perception of the hierophany of the sky in which the Chou people had encountered their Supreme God, and does remain faithful to its original content, namely the belief in his absolute dominion. The notion of the Five Gods-on-High, on the contrary, was a false one. As a new version of Heaven, it derives ultimately also from the sky hierophany. But through its adaptation to the cosmogony of the Yin-yang and Five Agents school it had betrayed their original message. Indeed, as we have shown, the Five Gods-on-High are not absolutely free. They no longer represent the Supreme God that revealed Himself in the form of the sky.

The relevancy of the notion of God is seen in its appeal to men. To be so, it must satisfy two necessary conditions. First, it must respond to men's vital interests. Second, it must keep its promise. As personified by the mythical emperor Yao and honored in the Suburban sacrifice, Heaven appeared above all to be the Guardian of the moral order. As such, He responded to the need of those who were interested in maintaining the established order. So, in early Chou times, Heaven was indeed a relevant notion of God to the Chou aristocrats. However, to the mass of people whose only concern was to gain a living through working on the land God-on-High was far more significant. To them Heaven was, therefore, less relevant. Again, in the late Chou period, the Chou order collapsed so that the events denied what Heaven seemed to have promised. Then, it was that Heaven came to be disenchanted and deprived all together of its efficacy as a symbol of God.

At the first glance, the adequacy of a notion of God seems to be very different from its relevancy. Heaven, for instance, was a notion of God relevant to the Chou aristocratic society. It was not, however, an adequate notion of God because it represented only one aspect of the divine perfection. But this is not the sense in which we take the word, for we do not refer it to the fact that a notion exhaustes the reality of its object. No notion could ever be adequate in this sense. We refer it rather to the capacity of a notion of God to cope with the religious consciousness of a given society at a definite moment of its history. Taken in this sense, the adequacy of a notion of God is often hardly distinguishable from its relevancy. We shall illustrate this point with the following example.

In the early years of the Shang dynasty, when the Chinese society was still relatively homogeneous, God-on-High — being related to Earth as well as to the royal ancestors, and honored both as a fertility God and the Guardian of the moral order — was indeed an adequate expression of the religious consciousness of this society. But the situation did not last. With the rise of the Chou dynasty, God-on-High came to be suspected of partiality because of His alleged affinity to the former royal house. Consequently, He was replaced by Heaven as the Guardian of the moral order. However, He kept his function of a fertility God and, in this capacity, continued to receive the suburban sacrifice in the spring and to be honored by the mass of people. We have explained how the continual existence of God-on-High under the Chou dynasty was an effect of the uneven cultural change. This amounts to saying that neither Heaven nor God-on-High could cope with the religious consciousness of the Chou society as a whole, each being relevant only to a part of its population. In other words, neither of them was an adequate notion of God.

It is a very significant fact that, already in the formative period of the Chinese empire, neither Heaven nor God-on-High was an adequate notion of God any longer. We see in this the main cause for some unpleasant phenomena that plagued particularly the traditional religion of this nation. We refer namely to the phenomena of schism, syncretism, and idolatry. The schism has appeared not only in the different cults fostered by the ruling class and the mass of people, but also in the various ways of conceiving of the Supreme God on the various occasions of the celebration. The syncretism has been evident above all in the simultaneous practice of a variety of forms of religion. Finally, the adolatry has been indulged in by adoring such gods as the Five Gods-on-High, the couple Heaven and Earth, and God *T'ai-i*, who, having betrayed their original message, have become more the creatures of the human mind than the images of the living God. No one is more aware of these aberrations than the Chinese themselves. Indeed, from Confucius up to the modern iconoclasts and religious reformers, the prophetic words of condemnation have never ceased to be heard.

SALVATION PRESENT AND FUTURE

BY

DAVID FLUSSER

Jerusalem

Since Albert Schweitzer, the importance of eschatology for original Christianity has rightly been stressed. Later, a further point entered the scholarly discussion: If Christianity at its very beginnings expected that "the present generation will live to see" Christ's second coming (Mk. XIII, 30), these hopes were not fulfilled. How much did this frustated belief change the original structure of Christianity? Many think that this "Parousieverzögerung" was the decisive turning-point in Christian faith, which almost utterly changed its structure. According to this opinion non fulfilled eschatological expectations caused that it is worth rethinking this thesis, because in its outspread form of Christian thought: instead of expecting their salvation in future, Christians learned to look back. Their hopes now became based upon the salvation which already took place through Christ. It seems to me that it its worth rethinking this thesis, because in its outspread form it does not fit the facts as reflected in ancient Christian sources and study of parallel phenomena in history of religions does not confirm it. In the present paper we wish merely to bring some considerations to bear upon this complex problem, basing ourselves mainly upon some Christian movements, both ancient and modern, and upon some non-Christian phenomena.

For a full discussion it would be proper to take also in account the modern messianic movements of aboriginal peoples and to see how they react when the expected liberation does not take place. Although a comparison between Christian eschatology and "messianic" movements, which are not deeply influenced by Christian thought, has a specific value, chiliastic movements within the three monotheistic religions are also of greate interest for a better understanding of Christian origins. The same forces operate in them which once gave birth to Christianity and the renewal of these forces in another environment can teach us about their original nature.

The contemporary negro movement, the Black Muslims, is basically rooted in Christian traditions; the Moslem influence on it being important but superficial. Black Muslims have their own eschatology [1]: the Christian era, as well as the six thousand years during which the white race has dominated the world, will expire about A.D. 2000. The destruction of the world will definitively occur some time before that year and the year 1970 has been suggested by the spiritual head of the movement, although the "exact day is known only to Allah". That the day is coming all "Muslims" believe. Adult Muslims spoke about it in 1959 and some actually looked for signs in the skies on fine summer evenings. When they see some thing of interest, they alert their neighbours and friends either by word of mouth or by telephone. "Some Muslims", said a prominent member of the movement —, "are unhappy because the final judgment or the Last Day hasn't arrived soon enough". Others are not, however, intensely preoccupied with expectation of the "Last Day". Some do not expect it to happen in their lifetime. There is a statement of a Black Muslim sister which is of greatest importance for our discussion: "For me the day itself comes into my mind seldom. It is not that it is not important. We have a work to do. We do not know when it will come, maybe today or a long time from now. In any case, we can't put all hope on one day." Believers are often more perceptive than scholars who study their believes. We can only add to the statement that the expectation itself and its ideological content, especially the movement and its social meaning ("we have a work to do"), is more important than the precise date of salvation and its delay. There is another reason why for the Black Muslims the "eschaton" is not so eagerly expected. Twenty high-school and thirty five seventh- and eighth-grade students at the University of Islam, the spiritual centre of Black Muslims, were asked whether they would want to see the final judgment in the immediate future. Not one of them was ready for it. The most frequently given reason for wanting a delay was that they have not attained the degree

---

1) See E. U. Essien-Udom, Black Nationalism, The Rise of Black Muslims in the U.S.A., Penguin Books, 1966, pp. 115-132.

About the two other modern chiliastic movements, which will be treated in this article see Yona Malachy, Jehovah's Witnesses and their Attitude toward Judaism and the Idea of Return to Zion, *in* Herzl Year Book, Vol. V, 1963, pp. 175-208; idem, Seventh Day Adventists and Zionism, ibidem, Vol. VI, 1964-5, pp. 265-301.

of "righteousness" which would qualify them. Some felt that they had not lived enough to enjoy the "things of this world". A member of the movement said too: "I would be sad to leave parents and close relatives behind to be destroyed. It would be a dreadful day for me and I would say, give them one more chance". Such feelings are a well known undesired consequence of eschatological teachings.

Precise prediction of years of the eschatological drama was not completely absent from Jewish and Christian speculations in antiquity, but in comparison with medieval and modern chiliasm it was evidently extremely rare. From the Middle Ages until today the search for dates is one of the most typical occupations of eschatological movements. But what happens when the expected year passes without the event? Are the chiliasts cured by this from their illusion and does the movement disappear? Although I do not want to underestimate the damage and desertions which follow the disappointment of the believer, it is clear that discovery of a crucial mistake in prediction does not cause the end of the chiliastic movement. Hussite chiliasts predicted an apocalyptical destruction of mankind; only five towns in Bohemia will remain — an idea originating from Isa. XIX, 18. One of the towns was originally Písek, a small township in southern Bohemia; later it changed to Pilsen, "the City of the Sun" and finally Pilsen was supplanted by Tábor, the newly founded centre of the Taborites. World destruction should have taken place at Pentecost, A.D. 1420, but when the prediction failed to eventuate, later dates were suggested. 2)

The Hussite chiliastic movement flourished for only two years (1419-1421); it degenerated, became excentric and was finally suppressed by Hussite leaders and its members killed. Although chiliastic trends appear sometimes also in later Hussitism, the apocalyptic movement itself was too shortlived to represent an example of structural changes which could be caused by frustrated hopes of the Second Coming of Christ. Fortunately there are enough religious groups which do provide us with such examples and whose members live even in present times.

Adventists date from 1831; they maintain that the Second Coming of Christ is to be expected immediately. Primarily their opinion was that this event would happen in 1843-4. As the year passed unevent-

2) See, e.g. J. Macek, Ta'bor I (Prague, 1952), pp. 250-1; II Prague, 1955), pp. 53-4, 64.

fully, numerous dates were suggested. In his later years, the founder of the movement became less ready to pronounce dates. Differences of opinion on this subject produced schism. After the expected Second Coming of Christ failed to be realized in 1844 Seventh-Day Adventists constituted themselves as a separate body; they began to observe Sabbath instead of Sunday. Until today, there have been no serious structural changes in Adventist movement; they believe that the Scriptures provide the unerring rule of faith and practice and that the return of Christ to earth is imminent.

Jehovah's Witnesses, a sect of American origin, was founded by C. T. Russel in 1872. The centre of his message was the belief in the near end of the world for all save his own adherents, who would be the sole members of the Messianic Kingdom; the Second, secret Advent of Christ will take place in 1874 and the end of world in 1914. The outbreak of war in this year, though very different from the millenium which he had prophecied for that year, increased his popularity. His ideas were developed in a still more anarchistic way by J. F. Rutherford: he held that Christ had really, but invisibly, returned in 1914 and that the final Armageddon between God and Satan was imminent, though no precise date was fixed. The sect flourishes up to the present day, its views are practically unchanged, although its prophecies failed.

We have adduced only two examples of modern eschatological movements. The common feature of such sects is that the patterns of their belief remain constant, although they have to postpone the date of salvation; today all these groups have abandoned the temptation of predicting eschatological chronology, although the fixed date of redemption was the cause of their very existence. Thus, these movements exist, preserving their eschatological tension, without essentially changing the original meaning of their religious message. The space of time between the foundation of Jehovah's Witnesses until today is the same as from Jesus' crucifixion to the martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch. Adventists already exist as long as the time from Jesus' death to Melito of Sardes' writing of his Pascal Homily and Justin Martyr's martyrdom at Rome. The last believed in millenium and, according to his words, also "many others are of this opinion and believe that such will take place, but, on the other hand ... many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise".[3])

3) Justin Martyr, Dialogus cum Tryphone 80-1.

As already said, since Middle Ages the formation of eschatological movements has mostly been conditioned by the fixing of the date of future redemption. Such phenomena, although they existed were not typical in antiquity. Where there was no date or when it was not central, no decisive disappointment could arise when the prophecy failed. We have seen that the modern millenarist sects, though seriously handicapped by their own dates of salvation, have subsisted without essential change during a period whose length sufficed in current Christianity to accomplish the edifice of the Church and its doctrinal fundaments. Thus we may ask, if the so-called *Parousieverzögerung* was such a decisive factor for structural changes in original Christianity as it is often supposed today. But before answering the question, mention should be made of the various trends in early Christianity: it was by no means a monolithic movement.

The principal source of our knowledge about Jesus are the Synoptic Gospels. It seems that the idea of Jesus' vicarious death was completely lacking in the original stratum of Synoptic tradition [4]), although such an interpretation of the Cross is in accordance with the Jewish concept of martyrdom. It is also significant for our purpose that even the extant Synoptic Gospels do not speak explicitly about Jesus' incarnation and that the story about Jesus' birth is absent from Mark. [5]) He also only mentions Jesus' resurrection without describing it. The other Gospels bring new different descriptions of apparitions of the resurrected Lord. The question of the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus is difficult to answer not only because of Jesus himself, but also because of obscurities in the sources. It will not help our present investigation to try to know what really happened and what is the meaning of these events, but one thing is clear: in the Synoptic tradition motifs of Christology, though existing to some extent, are not

---

4) The two unequivocal statements about Jesus' vicarious sacrifice in the Synoptic Gospels are Mk. X, 45 (Mt. XX, 28, cf. Lk. XXII, 27) and Mk. XIV, 24 (Mt. XXVI, 28; Lk XXII, 19-20); in the first case, Luke, who is more original, does not reflect the idea of Jesus' sacrifice; in the second case the decisive passage is lacking in the important Codex Bezae and in two ancient translations, also reflecting the Western text. See D. Flusser, Jesus (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1968), pp. 60 (and note 80), 113-5 (and note 203). Un the whole question see also Morna D. Hooker, Jesus and the Servant, London, 1959.

5) See D. Flusser, Jesus, p. 16.

developed. Thus, in those circles in which the Synoptic tradition was formed, Christology did not have the same importance as in "Pauline" Christianity and in later Church. But it must be stressed — and we shall repeat it — that Christology was not invented as an answer to the delay of Advent: Christological motifs are almost all present in some way in Synoptic tradition. Paul, for whom the present salvation by Christ was so central, lived in a strong expectation of the Second Coming of Christ. The book of Revelation, which is itself an expression of eschatological hopes, contains a very developed Christology. Its author was himself a Hebrew-thinking Jewish Christian. Christology is not a product of Hellenistic Christianity. It seems that it was developed in Jewish Christian circles, different from those in which the Synoptic tradition was formed.

It could seem that in such Christian trends, in which the idea of salvation through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ was weak or existed only partially, the longing for the Second Coming was stronger, because for such — Jewish Christian — groups the salvation did not happen in the past but must be awaited in the eschaton. Unfortunately the documentation about the messianic hope of various Jewish Christian groups in the first century is very poor and incoherent, but even so we now possess sufficient references to show that the situation was more complex than could have been imagined. Until recently, the only outstanding Jewish Christian group which was known was the Ebionite sect. Now the situation has changed: S. Pinès discovered in an Arabic treatise, written around the year 1000, a Jewish Christian source, the greatest part of its material being from early centuries of Christianity. The source reflects traditions and opinions of a Jewish Christian sect, different from the Ebionites and very probably identical with the Nazarenes of the Church Fathers. [6])

Thanks to Pinès' discovery it has become clear that both the Ebionites and the Nazarenes agreed on one central point: for both Jesus'

6) See S. Pinès, The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source, *in*: The Israel Academy of Science and Humanities Proceedings, Vol. II, No. 13; "Israel, My Firstborn" and the Sonship of Jesus, *in*: Studies in Mysticism and Religion, Jerusalem, 1967, pp. 117-190; Judaeo-Christian Materials in an Arabic Jewish Treatise, *in*: American Academy for Jewish Research Proceedings, Vol. XXXV, 1967, pp. 187-217. See also D. Flusser, Die Christenheit nach dem Apostelkonzil, *in*: Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament, München, 1967, pp. 65-75.

main function was to be a prophet and not the Messiah. As is known, the Ebionites saw in Jesus the "true prophet". This concept was only a part of their special doctrine: they believed that the coming of the true Prophet Jesus abolished the old temporal "three powers", the prophecy, the kingdom and the priesthood. [7]) This true prophet had also appeared previously in various guises throughout history, from the beginning of the world. None of these — and other — special Ebionite doctrines are professed by the original authors of the Nazarene texts, [8]) but for them too Jesus is simply a prophet, and we never read that he was the expected Jewish Messiah. [9]) Thus, the concept of Jesus as the Prophet has its origin in the first generations of Jesus' disciples. It can already be found in the Gospels and originates from Jesus himself (see Luke 13, 33), while the question, if Jesus saw himself as the Messiah, cannot be easily solved. Both the situation in the Synoptic Gospels and the existence of two Jewish Christian groups, which stressed the prophetic task of Jesus, make it certain, that already at the beginning a part of Jesus' disciples saw in their master a prophet, and perhaps not the Messiah at all. From this faction both Ebionites and Nazarenes originated.

It could be supposed that such early Christian groups as Ebionites and Nazarenes, which did not accept the Christology as developed e.g. in Paulinism and which became the official doctrine of the Church, saw salvation mainly in future, but the fact that Jesus' prophetic and not the messianic task was the centre of their theological speculations complicates this situation. The expectation of the Second Coming of the Messiah, who will also bring political redemption, is surely a decisive impulse for a chiliastic atmosphere, but the hope for a future return of the Prophet has not *per se* the same impact upon the minds of believers.

---

7) This idea is already hinted at in Mathew XII, 6, 41, 42 (Lk. XI 31, 32); there is something greater than the temple, Jonah (the prophet) and Solomon (the king). Thus, the originally Jewish idea of these "three powers" (see e.g. Philo's Life of Moses II, Josephus, Ant. XIII 299) was applied to Jesus, probably already in the source Q. The idea became important in the Ebionite sect (see G. Strecker, Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen, Berlin, 1958, p. 148). We would suggest that Eusebius, hist. eccl. I 3, 7-13 is Ebionite, probably taken from Hegesippus.

8) See Pinès, Jewish Christians p. 12.

9) See D. Flusser, Die Christenheit nach dem Apostelkonzil pp. 66-7.

Moreover, there is a further point, which could cause a weakening of eschatological tension in these circles. There are today scholars and thinkers who maintain that the belief in Jesus as the Messiah was created by the apparitions of the Resurrected to his disciples. The truth is that these visions could only confirm a faith which existed before and was weakened by the catastrophe of cruxifixion. It must also be remembered that the idea of a Messiah who will arise from death and ascend the heavens was foreign to Judaism. The idea of resurrection and ascension already existed among the Jews but it was by no means a proof for messianic dignity. There is also, as far as can be seen, no instance showing that resurrection should be the crown and consequence of the expiatory death of a martyr. Thus it is improbable that Jesus' resurrection was interpreted already in the first years in the light of later Christology and there is no reason why even later all Christian groups should understand the apparitions of the resurrected Jesus as a decisive Christological event. What was then more natural than to see in these apparitions mere parallels to the assumptions of Enoch, Moses or Jeremiah, or to the apparitions of Elijah or to the resurrection of John the Baptist? [10])

If a Jewish Christian group saw in Jesus only a prophet and in his resurrection not a central event of faith, then the way was paved for a progressive weakening of the whole eschatological tension. This is what happened in the Nazarene sect when it came into conflict with the Church. The Church, though not greatly interested in eschatology, saw in the Messianic dignity of Jesus and in his resurrection important components of the Christological drama, whose final stage will be the Second Advent of Christ. The Nazarenes, like other Jewish Christian groups, opposed the Christology of the Church and this explains why in the whole new Nazarene source the resurrection of Jesus is never mentioned. It seems even probable that according to this Jewish Christian source Jesus pronounced the last instructions to his disciples (see Mt. 28, 19-20) not after his resurrection, but before, "he left this world". [11]) This group's polemic tendency against eschatology becomes clear from their sectarian form of the Lord's Prayer; "Our father that

10) See D. Flusser, Die Christenheit, pp. 67-8.

11) See D. Flusser, The Conclusion of Matthew in a New Jewish Christian Source, *in*: Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute, Jerusalem, Vol. V, 1967, p. 113. In the new source Jesus is once mentioned, in a parodistic passage, as the

art in heaven, Your name is holy and Your dominion precious, Your command is executed in the heaven and earth. Nothing that You demand is beyond Your power and nothing that You wish is withheld from You. Forgive us our sins and trespasses and do not punish us in hell." [12]) Thus the text of the prayer is so changed that even a slightest possibility of its eschatological interpretation is radically eliminated. All this shows that in a certain stage of their development the Nazarenes not only weakened, but even practically abolished the eschatological aspect in their message.

The position of the other Jewish Christian group, the Ebionites, as far as we can see from their doctrines, was different. Their dynamic belief in the True Prophet, appearing in various shapes throughout history, from Adam to Jesus, tended naturally to the eschaton, to the Second Coming of Jesus. And indeed, at the end of the first century, a chiliastic movement arose among the Ebionites: the Elchasaites. [13]) Their name is derived from the aramaic Elxai (or Elchasai), which Epiphanius translated rightly "the hidden Power". [14]) This name fits the typical Ebionite (and Elchasaite) belief of successive incarnations of the heavenly Power. The Elchasaites thought that this power was at the beginning incarnated in Adam, later in Jesus and that it incarnates when it wants. [15]) Thus the "Hidden Power" of the Elchasaites is near to the "hidden (or inner) Adam" (ādām kasiā) of the Man-

---

eschatological judge (see Pinès, Jewish Christians, p. 7); this need not be a hint to his resurrection after the crucifixion.

12) S. Pinès, "Israel My Firstborn" and the Sonship of Jesus (see above, note 6), p. 184.

13) About the Elchasaites see G. Strecker, Elkesai, *in*: Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart, 1959, pp. 1171-1186; J. Thomas, Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie, Gembloux, 1935, pp. 140-156; H. J. Schoeps, Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums, Tübingen, 1959, pp. 325-334; K. Rudolph, Die Mandäer I, Göttingen, 1960, pp. 233-9; H. Waitz *in*: E. Hennecke, Neutestamentliche Apokryphen[2], Tübingen, 1924, pp. 422-5; A. Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur[2] I, Leipzig, 1958, pp. 207-9, G. Allon, Jewish History in Palestine in the Mishnaic and Talmudic Period, I, Tel Aviv, 1952, pp. 188-190 (hebrew). It can easily be shown that the Elchasaites were only a faction in the Ebionite movement; even the name "The Great King" (Hippolyt IX, 15; Epiphanius 19,3) appears in the Pseudoclementine literature (Homilies, Epistle of Clement to James, Chapter 13; XIII, 16) and in the Oracles of Hystapes (Lactantius, Div. Inst. VII, 16, 24) and Orac. Sybill. III, 560.

14) Epiph. XIX, 2; the aramaic form is ḥjl ksj.

15) Epiph. XXX, 3; L III, 1; Hipp. IX, 14; X 29.

daeans. [16]) The Elchasaites possessed a holy book of revelations "of which they say that it has fallen from heaven". [17]) According to the Church Fathers, the prophet, who received the book was Elxai (or Elchasai). We have already seen that the meaning of the name is "the hidden Power". This could be the name of the prophet only if we suppose that the man Elxai himself deemed to be an incarnation of this Power, as earlier Simon Magus was thought to be "The Great Power" of God (Acts VIII, 10). This could be in accordance with the doctrines of the sect, but the reports of the Church Fathers that the fouder of the sect himself was named Elxai can be based on a confusion: we learn from the sources that the seer received the book in a vision from a being of colossal size which appeared to him together with another, female, being of similar proportions [18]): the male giver of the book was the Son of God and the female the Holy Spirit. [19]) Thus it is easier to suppose that "Elxai" was not the seer, but the giver of the "Book of Elxai", the Son of God, i.e. God's "Hidden Power".

In the apocryphal Testament of Isaac [20]) an interesting prophecy is preserved: "And hereafter twelve mighty ones shall come forth, and Jesus the Messiah shall come of thy (Jacob's) seed of a virgin whose name is Miriam, and God shall abide upon him till a hundred years be fulfilled". [21]) We shall soon see that the text is of Elchasaite origin; thus the "twelve mighty ones" may be twelve incarnations before Jesus'

---

16) About this concept see K. Rudolph, p. 151-2.

17) Eusebius, hist. eccl. VI, 38; see also Hipp. IX, 13.

18) Mystical descriptions of immense measures of Godhood are known both from Judaism ("shiur komah") and from the Gnosis. The idea that God has a shape is clearly expressed in the 17th book of the Ebionite Clementine Homilies and Recognitions III, 30.

19) See Hipp. IX, 13; Epiph XIX, 4; XXX 17; LIII, 1.

20) The Arabic version (in English translation) was published by W E. Barnes *in*: M. R. James, The Testament of Abraam, Cambridge, 1892, pp. 140-151; the Coptic version (in English translation) by S. Gaselee *in*: G. H. Box, The Testament of Abraham, London, 1927, pp. 57-75.

21) James, p. 143; Box, p. 63. The English translation of the Coptic version runs: "After these, therefore, there are twelve generations (γένεα) that shall come from thee, so that Jesus Christ may come forth from thy seed, from a virgin called Mary, and God was with him until he had completed a hundred years". Thus, the "twelve mighty ones" of the Arabic version correspond to the Coptic "twelve generations". In the case of the end of the passage ("and God was ... years") the Arabic version is surely to be preferred to the English translation of the Coptic text: according to Genesis XXXV, 28 Isaac died at the age of 180 years.

birth. [22]) The hundred years is the period between the first and second coming of Christ; if we follow the wording of the source, it is more logical to see their beginning in Christ's birth than in his resurrection. This suggestion is confirmed by an important passage from the Book of Elxai quoted by Hippolytus. According to this apocalypse "there was preached unto men a new remission of sins in the third year of Trajan's reign [23]) and again when three years of the reign of the emperor Trajan are completed from the time that he subjected the Parthians to his own sway [24]) — when (these) three years have been completed, war rages between the angels of impiety of the north; by this event all kingdoms of impiety are in the state of confusion". [25]) The time of the new remission of sins is the third year of Trajan's reign, i.e. the year 100-1.

We learn from extant fragments of the Ebionite Gospel that this sect accepted the Lukan chronology [26]) — and, as we have seen, the Elchasaites were only a special group in the midst of the Ebionites. It is known that our common date of Jesus' birth is a logical consequence of the chronology in Luke [27]) and it was not necessary to wait for Dionysius Exiguus to perform this calculation. Thus according to the prophecy of the Book of Elxai the date of the new remission of sins will be a hundred years after the birth of Jesus and according to the prophecy, contained in the Testament of Isaac, God shall abide upon Christ "till a hundred years be fulfilled". We see that there was a "chiliastic" expectation of the Second Coming of Christ in the year hundred after his birth. The Testament of Isaac probably preserves this expectation in the form as it existed before this fixed date and the Book of Elxai in the version which was known to Hippolytus seems to have changed the prophecy after that the year 100 passed without the expected event; now the third year of Trajan's reign became only the date of a

22) But see the preceding note. In a Christian addition to the Jewish Book of Secrets of Enoch we read about "twelve priests" who will precede Christ. (Le Livre des Secrets d'Hénoch, texte slave et traduction française par A. Vaillant, Paris, 1952, pp 115-7).

23) Hippolytus IX, 13, 3.

24) The text in the only extant manuscript is corrupted. For the conjectures see Wendland's edition, Leipzig, 1916, p. 255.

25) Hipp. IX, 16, 4.

26) A. Resch. Agrapha, Leipzig, 1906 (Darmstadt, 1967), pp. 221, 229.

27) For this computation see Louis Dupraz, De l'association de Tibère au principat à la naissance du Christ, Fribourg, 1966, p. 101.

new remission of sins; but the third year of Trajan's reign after his victory over the Parts will be the time of destruction of the wicked kingdoms. We cannot learn from the fragment if according to the Book of Elxai this will be also the time of the Second Coming of Christ. What we do know is that the catastrophe will follow the Roman victory over Parthia and will be the consequence of the inner war between the wicked angels of the north, these angels being evidently the demonic representatives of the wicked kingdoms. The parallelism between the visible and the invisible world is genuinely Persian; so is also the belief that the wicked angels dwell in the north: according to the Persian religion the north is the place of the wicked demons. [28]) Thus, the connection of the Elchasaite prophecy to Trajan's Parthian expedition is not accidental. We even learn from Hippolytus (IX, 13,1) that the Book of Elxai itself originated from Parthia; according to this author Elxai received it "from the Seres of Parthia". [29])

In that time "Seres" was a designation of a nation which produced silk and lived above India, i.e. the Chinese and Tibetans. As the trade with Chinese silk passed through Parthia, the "Seres of Parthia" are Chinese or Tibetans who came to the Parthian territory. Thus, the Book of Elxai was supposed by its readers or by its author to be a sort of "Chinese" or "Tibetan Gospel", a mysterious revelation from the distant East. The Elchasaite prophecy about the destruction of the wicked kingdoms in the third year after the Parthian defeat originates probably in Ebionite circles in Parthia and is an expression of the spirit of revenge after the Roman victory over the East.

It is practically certain that the expectation of salvation in the bird year after Trajan's victory was then not limited to the Elchasaite movement. There exists an interesting ancient Christian document, namely the "Epistula apostolorum" which was discovered in Ethiopic and Cop-

---

28) See K. Rudolph, Die Mandäer I, Göttingen, 1960, index, s.v. Norden and especially pp. 137, 179. According both to the Mandaeans and Manichaeans the north is a good side.

29) About this name of nation see e.g. A. Hermann, China, *in*: Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Vol II, Stuttgart, 1954, pp. 1078-1100. According to Josephus (Ant. I, 69-71) two steles, containing heavenly wisdom, were erected by the descendents of Set and are until now in the land of Seiris (κατὰ γῆν τὴν Σειρίδα). This land is almost surely the land of Seres. Josephus' words are an interesting parallel to the origin of the Elchasaite revelation "from The Seres of Parthia".

tic translations and Latin fragments. [30]) The work is surely not Ebionite or Elchasaite; to use a term, taken from later reality, it is orthodox and originates from a group of Christians of Jewish origin which accepts the importance of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. In the "Epistula apostolorum" the resurrected Lord announces to his disciples the date of his Second Advent [31]): according to the Coptic version, it will take place after 120 years and according to the Ethiopic version when the year 150 will be completed. Although the wording of the two versions seems to indicate that these numbers have to be counted from the resurrection, L. Gry [32]) is probably right, when he suggests that the original intention was to the space of time from Jesus' birth to his Second Coming. Gry's suggestion is confirmed by the fact that the year 120 after Jesus' birth of the Coptic version fits the second date of Elchasaite expectation, namely the third year after Trajan's victory (the year 119/120). [33]) It is probable that the difference of dates of Advent in the two version — 120 years in the Coptic and 150 years in the Ethiopic version — was caused by failling of the first expectation. The progressive postponing of dates is, as we said before, the destiny of all chiliastic movements.

The information we have collected shows that there were, at the end of the first and in the first half of the second century, Christian groups which expected eschatological events at a close, fixed date. We have also seen that these Christians were prepared to postpone the date if the expected day passed without events. This is a natural procedure in all "chiliastic" movements. Such a delay of a date is in similar modern movements only the first step towards the abolition of the searching for dates at all, and this abolition does not mean that this movement changed its religious structure and rejected its hopes for future. In antiquity the disillusion at the failure of a prophecy was not as strong as in medieval and modern times, because precise date of salvation was

---

30) See H. Duensing *in*: E. Hennecke, Neutestamentliche Apokryphen[3], Band 1, Tübingen, 1959, pp. 126-155.

31) Duensing, pp. 134-5.

32) L. Gry, Le date de la parousie d'après L'epistula apostolorum, *in*: Revue biblique, Vol. 49 (1940), pp. 86-87.

33) It is possible that 120 years after Jesus' birth were also chosen, because, according to Gen. VI, 3, the maximal age of man is 120 years. — About a Syrian Christian tradition, connected with the year 119, see H. Windisch, Die Orakel des Hystaspes, Amsterdam, 1929, p. 39.

then not a rule as in later times. Thus, Christianity could exist at least for a long time without changing its content because of the so-called "Parousieverzögerung".

We have to add to this point also other considerations. There is no "messianic" movement which would be based exclusively upon an eschatological expectation. Such a movement is always also characterised by its faith, its "Weltanschauung". These concepts of God, human history, social ideals and understanding of man's destiny have always their impact upon the content of the special eschatological hope. Often not only faith, but also the organisation of a "chiliastic" group or sect, its relation to the surrounding world, and the indefinable human and religious atmosphere within the community are decisive factors, which, together with expectation of redemption, form the personality of the believer and answer more or less his personal demands. This explains why also such religious groups which have no developed theology or whose raison d'être is mainly the eschatological message, can subsist a long space of time, even if their hopes so often failed to be fulfilled.

Survival and further flourishing of an eschatological religious movement is safeguarded if the community possesses a developed and autonomous theology and especially if its members believe not only that their redemption will happen in future, but also that salvation was already offered to them according to divine design. An interesting illustration of such an attitude are the Essenes. It is clear from the Dead Sea Scrolls that this Jewish sect remained faithful to its eschatological hope, though meantimes they came to the conclusion that this wicked time will continue longer than biblical prophets foretold. The end of this period was hidden from these ancient seers, but was revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness, the founder of the Sect (Habbakuk Commentary VII, 1-13). Essene eschatology was based upon the doctrine of double predestination: the members of the community, the Sons of Light are God's elect, preordained for final redemption, while the Sons of Darkness will be destroyed. This dualistic theology of election and curse, together with the strict organisation of the Sect, led to the view that the Sons of Light, chosen by God's providence, are in a state of grace from the moment when they were accepted into the community: at that time they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. From these positions Essenes developed a deep anthropology which expressed itself in the Thanksgiving Psalms: the unredeemed humanity

is in the sphere of the sinful flesh and the elect ones can overcome the sin of flesh with the help of the spirit granted to them. It is clear that *per se* such an anthropology does not strictly need a redemption in future, for the function of such a redemption can only be to complete the salvation which already occured. Indeed, it is a fact that in the Thanksgiving Scroll the political aspect of the final struggle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness is not present; the eschatological events are there described only as cosmic happenings, as a struggle between demonic powers. But even so, Esseness' hope in their near victory in the last days never left them. During all the years when the Sect existed Essenes believed, so to say, in three stages of salvation: the first is the preordained election, the second, when the grace begins to function at the moment when the elect entered the community and the third is the eschatological redemption in future with its reward for the elect.

It is more than probable that early Christian trend, which was the base of the theology of John the Evangelist, Paul and the authors of most other New Testament Epistles was deeply influenced by Essene ideas.[34]) Thus, there is no wonder that we find in the theology of this trend the three Essene stages of redemption, but especially the second received in Christianity a new meaning: the grace of salvation of a Christian is caused by his faith in Christ's expiation of sins through his death and resurrection. This belief became in the Church the centre of Christian message but is was already the main theme of Paul's preaching. Thus, there were at the very beginning of Christianity important groups which believed that the act of salvation took place in the past through Jesus Christ. Paul's attitude shows that in such groups the hope for imminent Second Coming of Christ could be as strong as in other early Christian groups which did not stress Christology or where Christology practically did not exist. Paul's witness shows that the developed Christology existed already in the first decades after Jesus' death and its structure proves that this belief did not emerge as a consequence of the delay of the Second Coming.

Not only Paul, but also the Book of Revelation is an example for the fact that Christology can be compatible with ardent desire for the

34) See D. Flusser, The Dead Sea and Pre-Pauline Christianity, *in*: Scripta Hierosolymitana, Vol. IV, Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jerusalem, 1958, pp. 215-266.

eschaton. Both Ebionites and Nazarenes lacked the belief in salvation, performed by the death and resurrection of Christ.

It would be natural to suppose that such Christian movements which did not believe that they are already saved by Christ, had a strong longing for future redemption. Unfortunately we do not know how strong was the chiliastic element in the Nazarene group at its very beginning; in any case, the newly discovered Nazarene texts show that this Jewish Christian group which had no interest in Christology, finally abandoned all acute eschatological expectations. The other Jewish Christian group, the Ebionites, professed a kind of futuristic Christology. No wonder that in their midst Elchasaite chiliasm arose. Its history offers an interesting parallel to modern "chiliastic" movements which can subsist a long space of time without losing their eschatological tension, even if all their prophecies failed. Elchasaites developed a new missionary activity in the time of Pope Callistus, i.e. a hundred years after their prophecy failed to be accomplished. And as late as the fourth century, two sisters, Marthus and Marthana, descendents of the family of the founder of the sect, were venerated as goddesses. We hope that these facts make it clear that the high appreciation of the day of Second Coming as a formative element in Christian faith is at least greatly exaggerated.

Martin Buber said [35]) that according to Christianity there is a knot on the cable leading from the creation to the final redemption of humanity at the end of days. The knot is the Christology of the Church; as we have seen it existed already in a time when eschatological tension in Christian faith was inevitable. Christology is not a product of progressive lessening of this tension. On the contrary: the belief that salvation already happened and that the Second Coming of Christ will confirm the division of mankind between saved and damned [36]) made the weakening of eschatological hopes in the Church easier. But the eschatological hope in Christianity could never be forgotten. Chiliastic movements arose repeatedly and it is a rule that in those movements

35) M. Buber, Ragaz und Israel, *in*: Neue Wege, Vol. 41, number 11, Zurich, November 1947

36) The righteous or sinful life of a Christian, not only his faith, is decisive for his salvation or damnation; thus the real decision of individual man's fate is in the moment of his death. This complication exists in all religions which believe both in afterlife and eschatology.

Christology is weakened on account of the actual expectations of Armageddon. [37]) On the other hand where Christology is strong, the longing for Millenium is comparatively weak. Thus, from the time of the constitution of the Christian Church there seems to be an equilibrium between Christology and Millenium, but at the beginning it was not so.

To sum up: even if a religious movement originates in acute eschatological expectation, its structure does not fundamentally change if this expectation is not fulfilled. If a religious movement is based upon eschatological expectation but had also a strong faith in a present, past or extra-historical salvation, the weakening of acute eschatological expectation can find its more or less complete substitute in strengthening of the idea of present salvation of its members. But this does not mean that this theological feature came into existence only in the stage of weakening of the eschatological tension. It is an organic part of the religious structure of the group from its very origins.

---

37) It is an interesting fact that in the modern Pentacostal movement the chiliastic moment is weakened because the central experience of election is the enthusiastic speaking in tongues of members of this movement (private communication by Y. Malachy).

MANICHÄISCHE VERBEUGUNGEN VOR DER SONNE AUF DEM VORDERPLATZE DER SANKT PETERSKIRCHE IN ROM ?

VON

L. J. VAN DER LOF

Hilversum

§ 1. In den Predigten Leos des Grossen findet sich eine Stelle, die man oft für eine Beschreibung eines manichäischen Sichverbeugens vor der Sonne auf dem Vorderplatz der Sankt Peterskirche in Rom gehalten hat [1]). Es handelt sich um die Worte: *quod nonnulli etiam Christiani adeo se religiose facere putant, ut priusquam ad beati Petri apostoli basilicam, quae uni Deo vivo et vero est dedicata, perveniant, superatis gradibus quibus ad suggestum areae superioris ascenditur, converso corpore ad nascentem se solem reflectant, et curvatis cervicibus, in honorem se splendidi orbis inclinent* (*Serm.* 7, 4 = Ballerini-Migne XXVII).

Es will uns aber vorkommen, dass dies sich unmöglich auf die Manichäer beziehen kann und zwar aus folgenden Gründen.

§ 2. I. Unsre Stelle will Menschen belehren, die aus dem Götzendienst kommen und keine Manichäer sind, wie sich aus den darauf folgenden Zeilen ergibt: *abstinendum tamen est ab ipsa specie hujus officii, quam cum in nostris invenit, qui deorum cultum reliquit, nonne hanc secum partem opinionis vetustae tamquam probabilem retentabit, quam Christianis et impiis viderit esse communem?* (*Serm.* 7, 4).

Es sind Gläubige, die diesen Brauch angenommen hatten: *Abjiciatur ergo a consuetudine fidelium damnanda perversitas* (*Serm.* 7, 5). Sie

1) So z. B. J. Leclercq und R. Dolle *Léon le Grand. Sermons. Tome I.* Paris 1964 [2], *Sources Chrétiennes* 22 bis, S. 158: *avec assez de vraisemblance*; F. Pyper. *Beknopt handboek tot de geschiedenis des Christendoms,* 's Gravenhage 1924, S. 242; T. Jalland *The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great.* London-New York 1941, S. 51: *it is possible that this practice reflects Manichaean influence*; R. Jolivet und M. Jourjon, *Six traités anti- Manichéens in Oeuvres de Saint Augustin* 17, Paris 1961, S. 774: *pourrait bien être une trace de manichéisme.*

handeln dann auch falsch zum Teil durch Unwissenheit und zum Teil durch Aberglauben: *quod fieri partim ignorantiae vitio, partim paganitatis spiritu* (*Serm.* 7, 4). Leo unterscheidet übrigens Judaei, haeretici, pagani (*Serm.* 6, 5 = B.M. XXVI).

Bei den Manichäern ist aber alles falsch, im Gegensatz zu allen andern Ketzereien, die nur zum Teil falsch sind: *Hoc modo si omnes quos catholica fides anthematizavit retractentur errores, in aliis atque aliis quiddam invenitur quod a damnabilibus possit abjungi. In Manichaeorum autem scelestissimo dogmate prorsus nihil est quod ex ulla parte possit tolerabile judicari* (*Serm.* 4, 5 = B.M. XXIV); *arcem tamen sibi in Manichaeorum struxit (sc. diabolus) insania . . .; ubi non unius pravitatis speciem, sed omnium simul errorum impietatumque mixturam generaliter possideret. Quod enim in paganis profanum, quod in Judaeis carnalibus caecum, quod in secretis magicae artis illicitum, quod denique in omnibus haeresibus sacrilegum atque blasphenum est, hoc in istos, quasi in sentinam quamdam, cum omnium sordium concretione confluxit* (*Serm.* XVI, 4; Pl 54, 178 A); *et ad contrarium fraudem, famulis utendo Manichaeis, sicut impulit interdicta praesumi, ita suadet concessa vitari* (*Serm.* 29, 4; B.M. XLII); *Nihil est apud eos sanctum, nihil integrum, nihil verum* (*Serm.* 23, 4; B.M. 9).

II. Das Typische des manichäischen Gebets zur Sonne fehlt. Für das Charakteristische können wir uns auf Augustinus berufen, der ohne Zweifel als Zeuge auftreten kann. Nach 439 war Karthago und Umgebung den Vandalen in die Hände gefallen. Das machte es einem, der sich nicht zum arianischen Glauben bekannte oder von Geburt kein Barbar war, unmöglich in Sicherheit zu leben. Ohne Zweifel gab es unter denjenigen die auswanderten sowohl Katholiken als Manichäer. Leo erwähnt selbst den Grund der Einwanderung in Rom: *Hos . . . Pestiferos, quos aliarum regionum perturbatio nobis intulit crebriores* (*Serm.* XVI, 5; Pl. 54, 179 A).

Augustinus erwähnt als das Eigenartige der manichäischen Sonnenanbetung, dass man sich mit der Sonne mitwendet und dass man Mond und Polarstern anbetet, wenn die Sonne abwesend ist: *Unde vos verius dixerim nec solem istum colere, ad cuius gyrum vestra oratio circumvolvitur (Contra Faustum XX, 5); quia solem et lunam vetuit adorari* (Deut. 17, 3), *ad quorum circuitum vos per omnos angulos vertitis, ut eos adoretis (Ibid.* XIV, 1).

„In seinem Buch über die Häresien bringt Augustinus einen ge-

drängten Abriss über den Manichäismus, dabei hält er auch für nötig, die Gebetsrichtung der Manichäer noch hervorzuheben. Wir erfahren hier, dass die Gebetsrichtung am Tage dem Laufe der Sonne folgte, während der Nacht der Stellung des Mondes; war aber mondlose Nacht, so trat auch hier die Sonne wieder in ihre Rechte ein. Nach einer Annahme kehrte nämlich die Sonne während der Nacht über den hohen Norden nach dem Osten zurück. So wendeten sich die Manichäer in dem mondlosen Nächten nach Norden [2]): *Orationes faciunt ad solem per diem, quaqua versum circuit; ad lunam per noctem, si apparet; si autem non apparet, ad aquiloniam partem, qua sol cum occiderit, ad orientem revertitur, stant orantes (De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum* 46, P.L. 42, 38).

Die Christen, die nur die Gebets-Ostung kannten, nahmen mit grosser Entschiedenheit gegen die manichäische Kreisbewegung Stellung. Noch lange zittert dieser Kampf nach. Er hat Ausdruck gefunden in einer Abschwörungsformel (9. Jh.), die dem zum Christentum übertretenden Manichäern abverlangt wurde. Die Betreffenden mussten sagen: „Ich verfluche, auch diejenigen, die nicht lediglich nach Osten gewendet zum wahren Gott beten, sondern der Bewegung der Sonne folgen in ihren tausendfachen Anrufungen." [3])

Nach H. Ch. Puech mussten die electi täglich siebenmal beten und die auditores nur viermal [4]).

Überdies teilt Leo uns nichts mit über einen Hymnus an die Sonne, wie bei den Manichäern üblich war. G. Flügel (*Mani* Leipzig 1862, S. 306) hat schon ganz richtig das Eigenartige der manichäischen Anrufungen empfunden. Er spricht von einer „Anwünschung" oder von einem „hymnenartigen Anruf" und meint S. 310 die manichäischen Gebete seien mehr Hymnen oder Lobgesänge als Gebete [5]). Oder etwas vorsichtiger behauptet Puech, dass ihre Hymnen und Psalmen Gebete sind, oder mit Gebeten im engern Sinn ein Ganzes bilden [6]).

Zwar wissen wir aus Augustinus' Schriften, dass die Manichäer gegen die Sonne zu Rücken und Nacken beugten: *Ita fit, ut ad istum*

2) Franz Joseph Dölger *Sol Salutis. Gebet und Gesang im christlichen Altertum* Münster in Westf. 1920, S. 21.
3) A. Adam *Texte zum Manichäismus* Berlin 1954, S. 99.
4) H.-Ch. Puech in *Annuaire du Collège de France* 1959, Paris, S. 265.
5) Erik Peterson ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ Göttingen 1926, S. 325.
6) Puech *Ibid.*, S. 268.

quidem solem dorsum cervicemque curvetis (*Contra Faustum* XX, 6). Aber die Manichäer haben damit aber keinen ihnen eigentümlichen Ritus geübt, sondern nur einen Brauch aufgenommen, der im Sonnenkult algemein üblich war [7]).

Wenn wir eine Bemerkung des J. B. Casale glauben dürfen, hätte Leo der Grosse aber nicht einmal besonderen Erfolg erzielt; denn nach den Worten dieses Schriftstellers sollen sich die Christen Roms noch bis zum Jahre 1300 im freien Atrium von St. Peter gegen die Eingangstüre nach Osten gekehrt haben, um so ihr Gebet zu verrichten. In diesem Jahre habe der Kardinal Stephanesco, der Neffe Bonifaz' VIII, den Florentiner Maler Giotto veranlasst, über jener Türe ein Mosaik anzubringen, dass Christus mit Petrus und den übrigen Aposteln im Schiffe darstellte, so dass nun die Christen beim Gebete dieses Bild vor sich sahen und die Gefahr der Sonnenanbetung vermieden wurde. Erst Urban VIII. habe dieses Bild in dem Innenraum der Basilika über dem Hauptportal anbringen lassen [8]). Dahingegen hören wir wenig mehr von Manichäern in Leos Rom. Gelasius vertrieb später noch einmal Manichäer aus Rom, als er sie entdeckt hatte [9]).

Übrigens ist die von Augustinus erwähnte Gebethaltung nicht die einzige, die angewendet wurde. Wir müssen uns also davor hüten nicht ausschliesslich auf die Worte des Kirchenvaters zu achten. Puech nennt als andere Gewohnheiten für die Manichäer; man kniete oder beugte das Knie und warf sich auch wohl längelang zu Boden [10]).

III. Leo unterscheidet verschiedene Merkmale, welche die Manichäer verraten, aber nennt selbst dabei nicht das Sichverbeugen vor der Sonne als solches. Wohl erwähnt er ihre Nahrungsvorschriften, nachlässige Kleidung und blassen Gesichten; *discretionibus ciborum, sordibus vestium, vultuumque palloribus* (*Serm.* 15, 5; B.M. XXXIV). Und ihr Fasten für die Sonne am Sonntag und für den Mond am Montag: *Luminaribus caeli stultam abstinentiam devoventes: siquidem in*

---

7) Dölger *Ibid.* S. 5.

8) *Ibid.*, S. 194.

9) L. Duchesne *Liber Pontificalis.* Paris 1886-'92. Vol. I., S. 255.

10) Puech Ibid., S. 268. Man kniete: Evodius *De fide* 24, S. 961, 22 Zycha; Fragmente Tourfān M 801, *APAW,* 1936, 10, S.27 und M 1, *APAW,* 1912, 5, S. 22; Koptisch *Psalter,* S. 13, 26, S. 18, 9-10, S. 19, 25-26; Chavannes-Pelliot, in *J A,* nov.-dez. 1911, S. 586.

Zu Boden: *Kephal.* LXXXIII, S. 200, 24-25 und 27-28, S. 201, 1 und LXXXIV, S. 208, 9-10; *Hom.* II, S. 36, 13-14.

honorem solis ac lunae prima ac secunda Sabbati jejunare delegerunt (*Serm.* 29, 5; B.M. XLII). Das bezieht sich aber unseres Wissens nur auf die electi [11]).

Auch ist bekannt, dass die electi der Manichäer keinen Wein geniessen durften. Wie sie sich auch unter die Katholiken mischen mögen, sagt Leo, sie laufen sich fest mit der Eucharistie, weil sie keinen Wein, aber wohl die andere Gestalt akzeptieren: *Cumque ad tegendam infidelitatem suam nostris audeant interesse conventibus, ita in sacramentorum communione se temperant, ut interdum, ne penitus latere non possint, ore indigno Christi corpus accipiant, sanguinem autem redemptionis nostrae haurire omnino declinent* (*Serm.* 29, 5; B. M. XLII). Gleich nach diesen Zeilen behauptet er, dass die Verweigerung des Bechers durch den Laien mit Exkommunikation zu bestrafen ist: *a sanctorum societate sacerdotali auctoritate pellantur.*

Mit dem Risiko, das die electi auf diese Weise liefen ist es für ausgeschlossen zu halten, dass sie mit einer Verbeugung vor der Sonne dieses Risiko noch einmal extra vergrösserten. Den Wein mussten sie ablehnen, aber die Verbeugung auf dem Vorderplatz konnten sie unterlassen ohne an ihrem Glauben Verrat zu üben. Aus diesem Grunde, so meinen wir, erwähnt Leo nirgends die Verbeugung vor der Sonne als eine typisch manichäische Angelegenheit.

Dennoch haben sie sich offenbar nur selten unter die Katholiken gemischt. Jedenfalls wird jedermann von Leo aufgefordert der Priestern gegen die Manichäer beizustehen. *Ut autem in omnibus, dilectissimi, placeat Domino vestra devotio, etiam ad hanc vos hortamur industriam, ut Manichaeos ubicumque latentes vestris presbyteris publicetis* (*Serm.* 23, 4; B. M. IX).

§ 3. Auf Grund der Tatsache, dass man Manichäer zu erkennen glaubte in unserer Stelle, hat man *Serm.* 7 (B.M. XXVII) vor 443 datieren wollen [12]). In dieses Jahr fiel nämlich der Prozess gegen die Manichäer in Rom und leitete Leo zusammen mit den bürgerlichen Behörden eine Strafverfolgung ein. Diese Datierung aus diesem Grunde fällt selbstverständlich aus wegen des oben Angeführten, worin Kirchengeschichte und Religionsgeschichte durcheinanderspielen.

---

11) H.-Ch. Puech *Le Manichéisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine.* Paris 1949, SS. 183, 184.

12) Leclercq und Dolle, S. 159.

ZOROASTRIAN SAVIOUR IMAGERY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

JOHN. R. HINNELLS

Newcastle upon Tyne.

Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery and its Influence on the New Testament [1])

Although influence of Zoroastrian eschatology on the Judeo-Christian tradition is widely recognised, [2]) so far little attention has been paid to the parallel concepts of the saviour in the two traditions. [3])

---

1) Based on a paper read to the British Section of the International Association for the History of Religions in London, Sept 18th. 1968.

2) See for example M. Black, The Development of Judaism in the Greek and Roman Periods, in the new *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, Ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, London, 1962, p. 696; J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, London, 1960, p. 444; W. D. Davies, Contemporary Jewish Religion, *New Peake* p. 705; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, London, 1961 and 1967, vol. I, p. 487, II, pp. 208f.; S. B. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic*, London, 1952 pp. 19f., 73 ff.; R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, London, 1962, p. 128; R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, London, 1965, p. 34; T. H. Gaster articles on 'Satan' and 'Gehenna' in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, New York, 1962; E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, Oxford, 1961, p. 218; H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, E.T. by D. Green, London, 1966, pp. 315, 323, 336; H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, London, 1963, pp. 43, 73; D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, London, 1964, pp. 235, 258-262 reservations are expressed on pp. 385-7.

3) Parallels between the Messiah and Sōšyant were noted by L. H. Mills, *Zaraθuštra, Philo, the Achaemenids and Israel*, Chicago, 1906, p. 437; R. Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, London, 1938, p. 251 and Von Gall argued that the post exilic Messiah was influenced by the Sōšyant imagery, βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, Heidelberg, 1926, pp. 251 ff. On the other hand N. Söderblom argued that the two figures developed independently, *La Vie Future d'après le Mazdeisme*, Paris, 1901, pp. 305-308. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, likewise, believes that the parallels between the two figures are vague and general, *La Religion de l'Iran Ancien*, Paris, 1962, p. 261. W. Staerk contends that the two are very different, since in Zoroastrianism the saviours are not related to the mythical figure of the Primordial Man and the Primordial King. Zoroaster and the other helpers, according to Staerk, are not returning figures of the primordial time;

This is rather surprising since it may be thought doubtful if there could be influence on the eschatological scene generally and not on the central figure of that scene. Further, it is generally held that the form of the later Jewish and Christian concept of the devil or Satan was influenced by Iranian tradition. If this be accepted then it has serious implications for the understanding of a saviour or Messianic figure. When Satan is thought of as the prosecuting counsel within God's court, as he is in the Book of Job, then he is not a figure with whom the saviour has to deal. When this figure becomes truly demonic, ruling over hell, leading a horde of demons and attacking the world, then the saviour is given a new task. Instead of defeating human forces at the end of the world, in the shape of Edom and Egypt, he must now defeat a supernatural being. This new task demands new imagery, and if the devil imagery be thought to come from Iran, then a most natural source for the developed saviour imagery would be, similarly, Iran.

The intention of this paper is, therefore, to trace the development of the saviour concept in the Zoroastrian tradition in order to see if it casts any light on the vexed question of the origin of the New Testament imagery.

It is important to begin by asking precisely what is meant by the term 'influence'. While this *may* imply the transference of a total concept from one tradition to another, it is a fact of everyday experience that to be influenced by someone or something is usually an unconscious process of modifying or developing one's own beliefs, in accord not only with the source of influence but also with one's own theological or philosophical convictions. It must be held to be highly unlikely that any religion would incorporate ideas totally alien to its existing faith. Since a religion is more open to influence from doctrines which bear some degree of similarity to the beliefs which it already

---

they are quite unmythical, and have their basis in the idea of the ethical process, *Die Erlösererwartung in den Östlichen Religionen*, Stuttgart, 1938, p. 268. W. Bousset was also doubtful about influence from the concept of Sōšyant on the figure of the Messiah, *Die Religion des Judentums*, third edition edited by H. Gressmann, reprinted Tubingen, 1966, p. 513, n. 1. A Kohut drew attention to parallels between Sōšyant and certain Talmudic beliefs, 'Was hat die Talmudische Eschatologie aus dem Parsismus Aufgenommen?,' *Z.D.M.G.* xxi, pp. 552-591. Influence on the later Messianic belief was suggested by Frost, op. cit. pp. 224-225, but he accepts the erroneous view of Glasson that Sōšyant 'does not seem to exercise a judicial function.'

holds one must begin by looking for a common stock of ideas on to which branches might be grafted.

There was certainly a common stock of ideas lying behind the figures of the Zoroastrian saviour, Sōšyant, and the Messiah. As the Messiah was born of the line of David, so Sōšyant was born of the seed of the great prophet Zoroaster; in each case the saviour came to establish the true faith and God's own nation; both, as it were, were God's 'trump card' against those who opposed his will, and both effected the renewal of the earth and of mankind. Whether there was anything more than a common stock of ideas worked out independently can only be decided after a study of the development of the two figures and a consideration of the historical factors involved.

The Zoroastrian Saviour, Sōšyant

What has to be established is not what the teaching of Zoroaster was concerning the saviour, although this may be one step on the way, but rather what was the teaching of the Zoroastrian*ism* of the pre-Christian period. In other words attention need not be confined entirely to Zoroaster's own hymns, the Gathas, but must also include the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. Unfortunately the extant Avesta is but one quarter of the original. Inevitably one seeks to reconstruct, as far as possible, the remaining three-quarters, and does so on the basis of the later Pahlavi texts, that is to say the Zoroastrian religious books written in Middle Persian, or Pahlavi, whose final redaction belongs to the ninth century A.D. and later. The dangers here are too obvious to need emphasizing, and New Testament scholars in particular have expressed doubts about bringing the Pahlavi texts into any discussion of the Zoroastrian origins of the New Testament imagery.[4]) Yet it is an old dictum that the value of a text lies not in its date but in its sources. It is important to remember the motive for the compilation of these books, and the word 'compilation' is used advisedly. The original Avesta was of enormous proportions, and, to help laymen understand its teachings, the priests made summaries and compiled selections in Pahlavi trans-

4) See for example C. Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and its non-Jewish Sources*, E. T. by R. G. Nisbet, Edinburgh, 1912, pp. 122 f. 139; Le P. E. B. Allo, *Saint Jean l'Apocalypse*, Paris 1933, p. 196; R. H. Charles, I.C.C. Commentary on Revelation, vol. II, p. 142.

lation of Avestan texts on particular subjects put together to form a continuous theme. A good example of this is the Bundahišn, which covers creation, the nature of earthly creatures and the end of the world. [5]) Another, the seventh, eight, and ninth books of the Dēnkard, which are the relevant ones for our subject, claim to be no more than summaries of the contents of the various books of the Avesta. It is, therefore, too easy to dismiss these Pahlavi books as merely ninth century productions. One has to assess the value of each element in the tradition to see if it can be said to be Avestan or a later innovation.

There is a further problem with which we have to contend. The extant books of the Avesta are wholly liturgical and consist largely of invocations where the functions of the divine beings are incidental to the main purpose of the text. This means that we cannot expect to find there a systematic expression of the Sōšyant imagery. The method of investigation which will be followed here in order to elucidate the Avestan belief in Sōšyant is as follows: firstly to consider the actual meaning of the title Sōšyant and to outline briefly the possible Gāthic basis of the belief; secondly to consider the Pahlavi teaching on each of the relevant points and then to turn back to the Avesta to see if there is any reason to accept that behind the Pahlavi picture there is an Avestan, i.e. pre-Christian, basis for the belief.

i). *Sōšyant in the Gathas*

The word Sōšyant is the future participle active from the root *su*, meaning more or less 'to benefit'; thus Sōšyant should mean 'one whose work will be beneficial', or 'one who will bring benefit'. A more precise connotation of the root *su* in a religious context can be gathered from the use of derivatives from this root in the Gāthās. Thus one text speaks of 'the long suffering for the wicked and *sava* for the righteous', where *sava* is generally translated as salvation. [6]) Another text reads,

---

5) On the Pahlavi Literature see M. Boyce, 'Middle Persian Literature' in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Ed. B. Spuler, Bd. 4, Abschn. 2, *Literatur* Lief. 1, pp. 31-66 and J. C. Tavadia, *Die Mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier*, Leipzig, 1956.

6) Ys. 30 : 11 See M. Wilkins Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas*, reprinted New York, 1966, p. 73 and J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Hymns of Zarathustra*, E.T. by Mrs M. Henning, London, 1952, p. 107.

'Or (is) he an enemy, who, verily, (being) a wicked-man, opposes thy salvation (*Sava*)?' [7])

A number of texts could be adduced illustrating the same point. From this evidence Bartholomae translates Sōšyant as Redeemer or Saviour. [8])

The word occurs a number of times in the Gathas, but its implications are far from clear. It is used in the plural, apparently to denote the future benefactors of the Good Religion. So, for example, in one Gāthā Zoroaster asks Ahura Mazda when the time of piety, justice, peace and general prosperity is to come:

Then shall they be the saviours (*saošyants*) of the lands who, through good purpose, by deeds in accordance with justice, shall attend-to satisfaction of thy teaching through wisdom. For they (shall be) the appointed suppressors of passion. [9])

The word is used in the singular in a number of texts, and it is generally assumed that in these passages Zoroaster is making an oblique reference to himself, [10]) although Lommel argues that Zoroaster did think of a future saviour to come. [11]). A good example of the ambiguity of the use of the word in the singular is in Ys. 48:9:

When shall I know (these things)? If, through wisdom, through justice, you rule over him from whom destruction threatens me, let the prophecy of good purpose be truly spoken for me. May the Saviour know how his reward shall be. [12])

From this we can conclude that Zoroaster spoke of a saviour, and the form of the word shows that the work of this figure lay in the future, but the ambiguity of its use forbids any more precise or confident statement of what he meant by it. The use of the plural suggests, however, that the word has not yet become a technical term, as it is in the Pahlavi literature.

---

7) Ys. 44 : 12, Trans Wilkins Smith, p. 111; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 69. See also Ys. 43 : 3; 45 : 7; 51 : 9 & 15.

8) *Altiranisches Worterbuch* Strassburg, 1904, p. 1551. See also H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras*, Tubingen, 1930, p. 226.

9) Ys. 48 : 12, trans Wilkins Smith, p. 137; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 39. Further examples of the use of the plural are 34 : 13; 46 : 3.

10) So, for example Wilkins Smith and Duchesne-Guillemin in their translations.

11) op. cit. p. 229. Sōšyant is used in the singular in Ys. 45 : 11 and in 53 : 2, a text composed shortly after the death of Zoroaster.

12) Wilkins Smith, p. 136; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 39.

ii) The Pahlavi teaching concerning Sōšyant

a) The Virgin birth of Sōšyant

Here it is said that at one thousand year intervals before the end of the world three 'brothers' will be born. The seed of Zoroaster was thought to be preserved in a lake, and towards the end of the world this seed will impregnate three virgins who go to bathe there [13]). Thus each of the three brothers is of the seed of, or the son of, Zoroaster, yet born of a virgin. Their names are Ušēdar, Ušēdarmah, and finally Sōšyant who is also called Astvat.ərəta. This belief is not set out in connected form in the Avesta, yet at least the elements appear there. Briefly the evidence is that the names of the three brothers occur in the ancient Avestan hymn, the Farvardīn Yasht, as do those of their three mothers. [14]) Incidentally by ancient is meant probably not later than fourth century B.C. in its presents form, yet clearly preserving even older material. [15]) Another of the Yashts speaks of Sōšyant 'coming up to life out of the lake Kasava', [16]), and this belief appears again in the Vendīdād, a work held by some to have been compiled in its presents form about the time of Christ. [17]) Again in the Farvardīn Yasht the fravashis of the faithful are said to watch over the seed of the holy Zarathustra. [18]) Hence, using the Pahlavi texts in conjunction with the hints which appear in the Avesta, it can be said that the basis of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Sōšyant is clearly Avestan.

In the later Avesta, that is the extant Avesta excluding the Gāthās, Sōšyant is sometimes used in the plural, as it is in the Gāthās themselves, with reference to the prominent leaders of the religion,

---

13) Dk. VII, 8, 51-60; VII, 9, 18-23; VII, 10, 15-19.

14) The three brothers are mentioned in Yasht 13, the Farvardīn Yasht, st. 128. The names being given, of course, in their Avestan form. The names of the mothers are given in sts. 141-2 of the same Yasht.

15) A. Christensen, 'Études sur le Zoroastrisme de la Perse Antique,' in *Det Kgl. Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser.* xv, 2, 1928, p. 34 argues for a pre-Achaemenid dating for the material on the grounds of the geography implied by the Yasht and the proper names which appear in it.

16) Yt. 19 : 92.

17) Vd. 19 : 5.

18) Yt. 13 : 62.

the future helpers, those who have not yet appeared and are therefore nameless. [19]) It can even refer to the priests who celebrate the Yasna sacrifice. [20]) Yet 'Sōšyant' in the singular is a definite reference to the last of the three brothers born towards the end of the world, as benefactor *par excellence.*

b) Sōšyant as restorer of the world

Dspite the characteristics of the Avesta that we have already referred to, nevertheless certain of Sōšyant's functions are so clearly defined that we have no need even to look to the Pahlavi texts. One such function is his restoration of the world. This is set out most clearly in the very old Zamyad Yasht, where it is said:

> We sacrifice unto the awful kingly glory... which will cleave to the victorious one of the Saošyants (i.e. to *the* Sōšyant) and to (his) other companions, so that he shall restore (literally make *fraša*) existence, not ageing, not dying, not decaying, not rotting, ever living, ever benefiting (literally ever having *su*), ruling at his will. [21])

It is also contained in a number of Avestan texts. His mother Ərədat-fədri for example, is worshipped in the following terms:

> We worship the Fravashi of the righteous maid Ərədat-fədri. who is called Vīspa-taurvairi. Therefore she is Vīspa-taurvairi (the all destroying) because she will bring him forth, who will destroy the malice of Daēvas and men, to having *su*), ruling at his will. [21])

Similarly Sōšyant is called the 'fiend smiter' in Vd. 19:5. In the Pahlavi literature Sōšyant has a number of helpers [23]); these also occur in the Avesta, and they, too, are described as destroyers of demons. The Zamyad Yasht again:

> And there shall come forward the friends of the victorious Astva.ərəta, (that is Sōšyant) well-thinking, well speaking, well-doing, of good conscience,

---

19) Yt. 11 : 17; 13 : 38; Vsp. 3 : 5; Ys. 9 : 2. See further, Lommel, op. cit. p. 229.

20) M. Molé, *Culte Mythe et Cosmologie dans l'Iran Ancien*, Paris, 1963, pp. 86, 120, 133, 135.

21) Yt. 19 : 89 ff. The translation is based on that of J. Darmesteter, *Sacred Books of the East*, reprinted Delhi, 1965, vol. xxiii, p. 226.

22) Yt. 13 : 142.

23) Ir. Bd. 34 : 16; Dk. VII, 11, 8. Lommel, p. 215 points out that even the number of helpers is the same in the Avesta as in the Bd., fifteen, although in the Bd. this has become fifteen men *and* fifteen women.

> and whose tongues have never uttered falsehood. Before them shall flee the ill-famed Aēšma with bloody club ... (the notorious demon of wrath).[24])

and there then follows a general onslaught of the powers of good on evil. Hence part of the restoration of the world by Sōšyant includes the final defeat of the demons.

c) The resurrection of the dead.

The Pahlavi Bundahishn states that another part of the restoration is the resurrection of the dead by Sōšyant.[25] This seems to have been part of the Avestan doctrine also. Certainly the resurrection is part of the restoration effected by Sōšyant. So, for example an Avestan fragment translated by Jackson states that at the coming of Sōšyant when Ahura Mazda rules over his creatures, then:

> In the earth shall Ahriman hide,
> In the earth, the demons hide.
> Up the dead again shall rise,
> And within their lifeless bodies
> Incorporate life shall be restored.[26])

The Farvardīn Yasht, again, supports this:

> We worship the Fravashi of the righteous Astvat.ərəta; Whose name will be the victorious Saošyant... He will be Saošyant (the Beneficient One), because he will benefit the whole bodily world; he will be Astvat.ərəta (he who makes the bodily creatures rise up), because as a bodily creature and a living creature he will stand against bodily destruction, to withstand the Drug of the two-footed brood...[27])

Here the fight against the devil involves the destruction, or reversal, of one of his chief weapons, death. Thus it can be seen that the Pahlavi doctrine of the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world by Sōšyant is Avestan.

d) The Eschatological Judgement.

In he Iranian Bundahishn it is also stated that it is Sōšyant who executes the eschatological judgement:

---

24) Yt. 19 : 89 ff.
25) Ir. Bd. 34:3 (edition of B. T. Anklesaria, *Zānd-Akāsīh,* Bombay, 1956).
26) 'The ancient Persian Doctrine of a Future Life,' in E. Hershey Sneath, *Religion and the Future Life*, New York, 1922, p. 136.
27) Yt. 13 : 128 f.

> Sōšyant, at the command of the creator will give all men their reward and recompense suiting their actions. [28])

This passage has the appearance of a translation from the Avesta, rather than a later addition, since it is not introduced by the customary commentators gloss 'there is one who says . . .' whereas the two passages on either side of this text are so introduced. One may also see how this belief could develop from the teaching of Zoroaster, since in one Gatha which looks forward to the defeat of evil, it is said:

> Then shall they be the saviours of the lands who, through good purpose, by deeds in accordance with justice, shall attend to the satisfaction of thy *səngha*. [29])

'*Səngha*' has been given a variety of meanings, 'decree', 'doctrine', 'judgement', 'speech', 'word' etc. and is rendered as teaching here by Bartholomae, which is the basis of the translation quoted above. But it appears to be used elsewhere in the Gathas for 'judicial decree', 'judgement' — in an eschatological sense. [30]) Zoroaster may here be saying, therefore, that at the end of the world the saviours would not only defeat evil would also administer the judgement of Ahura Mazda. Naturally anything done by the Sōšyant*s* (plural) would be thought to be done by *the* Sōšyant *par excellence*. Furthermore, in the Gathas Zoroaster himself is called a judge (*ratu*). [31]) As Sōšyant brings the revelation of Zoroaster, and is his son, it would not be surprising if he too were thought of as a judge. Hence it would be the extreme of scepticism to attribute this belief in Sōšyant as the mediator of the eschatological judgement simply to the period of the compilation of the Pahlavi books, that is to the ninth century A.D. Not only can one see how the belief would arise at an early period, but also the way it is presented in the Pahlavi books suggests that it was an Avestan belief.

e) The End Result

The effect of Sōshyant's work is to restore man to his primeval state.

---

28) Ir. Bd. 34 : 25, based on the translation of Anklesaria, p. 291.

29) Ys. 48 : 12, trans Wilkins Smith, p. 137.

30) e.g. Ys. 51 : 14, perhaps also Ys. 46 : 3. On other occasions it is quite definitely 'doctrine' rather than 'judgement', see for example Ys. 44 : 14.

31) Ys. 44 : 2 & 16. See Paury, pp. 56 f.

The first step on the path to sin, it is believed, was when he first began to eat and drink, for this left man open to the assaults of one of the chief demons, Āz, Greed. Thus, as man at first began to drink water, eat vegetables, drink milk and to eat meat, so at the end he will give up eating meat, drinking milk, eating vegetables and drinking water.

> (One) says in (the) Scripture: 'Whereas, when Mašya and Mašyāne[32]) grew up from (the) earth, (they) first drank water, then ate vegetables, then drank milk, and then ate meat, men, too, when their time of death (shall have) come, will desist first (from) eating meat, then (from) drinking milk, and then even from eating bread, (and) will be drinking water (only) till death.'
> Thus too, in (the) millenium of Ušēdarmāh, (the) strength of appetite will so diminish that men will be satisfied (for) three nights and days, by eating one (single) meal. And then after (that), (they) will desist (from) meat food, and will eat vegetables and drink (the) milk of animals; and then, (they) will abstain even from (that) milk diet, (and then they) will abstain even from vegetable food, and will be drinking water, and ten years before Sōšyant will come, (they) will remain without food, and will not die, and then Sōšyant will raise (the) dead.[33])

This return to the primeval state also involves the defeat of death, since death is one of the weapons used by Ahriman to harm the Good Creation. Thus as the primeval bull was killed at creation by Ahriman,[34]) so Sōšyant will, at the end, sacrifice the mythical bull Haδayans, and from this sacrificial victim will come the elixir of immortality.

> And Sōšyant with (his) associates will perform (the) rites for (the) restoration (of the) dead; and (they) will slay (the) 'Haδayāns gāv' for that rite; out of the fat of that 'gāv' and the white hōm (they) will prepare (the) immortal (beverage), and give (it) to all men; and all men will become immortal up to eternity (and) eternal progress...[35])

The problem of the dating of these beliefs is a very vexed one. It is therefore essential to state clearly the object of this section: it is to consider the dating of the general parallels between creation and the end, not just that of the two examples cited. Since the bull sacrifice raises wider problems, it will be advisable to take the former belief and examine that.

The passage cited above explicitly states that the author is quoting

---

32) The first human couple in the Zoroastrian tradition.
33) Ir. Bd. 34 : 1-3, trans. that of B. T. Anklessaria, pp. 283-5.
34) Ir. Bd. 4 : 19 ff.
35) Ir. Bd. 34 : 23, trans. that of B. T. Anklessaria, pp. 289 ff.

scripture, i.e. the Avesta. But the quotation only draws parallels between creation and individual, not universal, eschatology:

> Whereas when Mašya and Mašyāne... men, too, when their time of death (shall have come)...

This text cannot, therefore, on its own, be used as evidence for the Avestan basis of the universal eschatological belief. The Dādistān ī dēnīg and the Dēnkard also refer to the idea that men will not need to eat food at the coming of Sōšyant. The appearance of this idea in Dēnkard 7 is important, since this section of the work, as has already been noted, is not just a priestly work of the ninth century, but is largely a collection and précis of Avestan passages. In the first appearance of the belief, Dk. 7 : 8 : 50 it is not said whether or not this is a quotation from the Avesta, but in 7 : 10 : 2 the introductory formula reads 'as what it says...' the 'it' being explained in paragraph 4 as 'revelation'. The passage then goes on to say that men do not have the same need for food during the millenium of Ušēdarmah, and that one meal is sufficient for three days. The same idea, in fact occurs in the extant Avesta. Yasht 19 : 96 declares that at the end hunger and thirst will be smitten. This last passage on its own might be taken to imply that the after life is a time of feasting, but in the total context of Zoroastrianism, where hunger is a weapon of Ahriman, and in the light of the above passages, it is more reasonable to take it as referring to a belief that men will not need to eat and drink, and thus will return to their primeval state. Dr. Shaul Shaked is, therefore, fully justified in saying that the basis of the creation/eschatological scheme is to be found in the Avesta.[36])

It may be possible to take this a stage further and see the patterns between the beginning and the end as pre-Zoroastrian, perhaps even Indo-Iranian. Thus in the Haoma ritual, the central rite of Zoroastrianism, the worshipper looks back to the first slaying, and forward to the last slaying of the bull.[37]) Although this ritual has been thor-

---

36) 'Eschatology and the Goal of the Religious Life in Sasanian Zoroastrianism', paper to the Study Conference of the I.A.H.R., Jerusalem, July, 1968. I am indebted to Dr Shaked for giving so generously of his time during the conference to discuss this matter with me.

37) See the forthcoming work of M. Boyce, 'Haoma, priest of the sacrifice', in the W. B. Henning Memorial Volume (in the press).

oughly Zoroastrianised it is in origin an Indo-Iranian rite. This alone might not be significant if it were not for the other examples of Indo-Iranian or even Indo-European elements of Zoroastrianism that have such a pattern. So Yima, ruler of the primeval golden age, constructed a *vara* into which he took the best of men, animals and plants (Vd. 2.) to preserve them from a great and terrible winter so that he could repeople the world at the end. The eschatological element appears only in the Middle Persian texts, the Bundahishn and Dēnkard, but because of the narrative's non-Zoroastrian character, and its parallels with Norse tradition, this story is often thought to be a fossillised form of an Indo-European myth. [38]) In another story, again of a non-Zoroastrian character, the monster Aži Dahaka was bound in chains at the beginning of the world, but it is said that at the end he will break free, and attack the creation, finally being destroyed by the resurrected hero of old, Kərəsaspa. Again this has a striking similarity to Nordic belief, and may represent an extremely old myth.

The return of the primeval state, therefore, in the work of the saviour can reasonably be said to represent an old rather than a late tradition.

These are all the functions of Sōšyant germane to this study. To summarise the conclusions so far; the title Sōšyant can be translated Redeemer or Saviour, and the form of the word shows that the work of the figure lies in the future. The title is used both in the plural and the singular in the Hymns of Zoroaster. In the plural the word is used freely to denote future leaders of the religion, in the singular it may denote a future saviour to come, or Zoroaster himself — or, of course, both. The implication of this may be that the word has not yet become a technical term, (i.e. in Zoroaster's own vocabulary). The word is still used freely in the Avesta, again it is used in the plural for the future benefactors, or to denote the priests. Nevertheless in the singular it definitely refers to the eschatological saviour who will be born of a virgin at the end of the world, but who will also be a son of Zoroaster. His task is to restore the world, which involves the defeat of the de-

38) See especially N. Söderblom, *La Vie Future d'après le Mazdeisme*, Paris, 1901, pp. 169 ff., A. V. Ström, 'Indogermanische in der Voluspá,' *Numen*, xiv, fasc. 3, Nov 1967, pp. 167 ff. E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North*, London, 1964, p. 278 and H. R. Ellis-Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, Pelican 1964, pp. 206 ff.

mons, raising the dead, assembling men for judgement, and the administration of the same. All this means a return to the primeval state which existed before the assault of Ahriman.

The Judeo-Christian Saviour Imagery

The purpose of this section of the paper is to do no more than to note certain developments in the Judeo-Christian saviour imagery.

The Saviour and the devil

That a belief in a devil is a late entry into the Jewish faith needs no demonstration. In the Old Testament Satan is simply an accuser at the heavenly court and there is nothing inherently evil about the figure. The verb *śaṭan* means prosecute, attack with accusations, accuse. [39]) In the books of Job and Zechariah a particular figure is denoted as 'the accuser' in heaven, [40] his role is to question, test, accuse, the motives of men. The first indication of a supernatural adversary is in the post-exilic I Chronicles 21:1 where *ha-śaṭan*, 'the accuser', is replaced by *śaṭan*, a personal name. Although he seduces David into doing evil, in this text he is still the messenger of God and a member of the heavenly staff. It is only in the inter-testamental period that Satan becomes a devil, ruling in Hell with a horde of demons. Even here, however, the concept has not assumed a fixed form. The figure can be called by a variety of names, the devil (The Life of Adam and Eve 12:1 dated about the time of Christ) [41]) Satan (The Similitudes of Enoch, mid-first century B.C.) [42]) Satanail (II Enoch 18:3 original Jewish work dated pre A.D. 70), [43]) Mastema (Jubilees 10:8, 150-100 B.C. and the Dead Sea Scrolls), [44]) Beliar (Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, c. 100 B.C. and the Dead Sea

39) W. Eichrodt, vol. II, p. 206.
40) Job 1 : 6 f., 2 : 1 ff., Zech. 3 : 1 f.
41) O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction*, E.T. by P. R. Ackroyd, Oxford, 1966, p. 637. D. S. Russell, p. 59.
42) Eissfeldt, p. 619; Russell, p. 52; E. Sjöberg, *Der Menschensohn im Äthiopischen Henochbuch*, Lund, 1946, pp. 35-9; M. Hooker, *The Son of Man in St. Mark*, London, 1967, pp. 47 ff.
43) Eissfeldt, p. 623; Russell, p. 61. In the form we have it the book has been subject to Christian redaction.
44) Eissfeldt, p. 608; Russell, pp. 53 f.

Scrolls).[45]). Azazel and Semjaza are the figures said by I Enoch 9:6f (c. 160 B.C.) [46]) to have been responsible for the bloodshed and lawlessness on earth. It may not be, of course, that all these names refer to the same figure. The functions of the 'devil' and his demons are variously described, but the general stress in the inter-testamental literature is on their role as beings who seduce men into evil, [47]) punish the wicked, [48]) and cause physical ill by inflicting disease. [49]).

As the Messiah in the Old Testament was thought to defeat the enemies of Israel, so in some inter-testamental literature the saviour figure is said to defeat the demons. In Jubilees 23:29 it is simply asserted that in those days

> there shall be no Satan or evil destroyer [50])

but in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs it is said that the 'new priest' raised up by God will bind Beliar, [51]) and that he will

> ... make war against Beliar
> And execute an everlasting vengeance on our enemies;
> And the captivity shall he take from Beliar
> And turn disobedient hearts unto the Lord. [52])

Although not all Jews believed in a 'devil' at the time of Christ, (the Sadducees, for example, did not), in the New Testament the defeat of the demons by Jesus plays a very important part in the Christology of more than one writer. Thus Mark expresses one aspect of the work of Jesus as the binding of the strong man, the devil, and the plundering of his house. [53]). The writer of Colossians, also, interprets the cross as the disarming of 'the principalities and powers'. [54]).

---

45) Eissfeldt, pp. 633 f.; Russell, p. 55 f. P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der Jüdischen Gemeinde*, Hildesheim, reprinted 1966, pp. 30 ff.

46) Eissfeldt, p. 619, Russell, p. 52.

47) H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, E.T. by D. Green, London, 1966, p. 315.

48) Russell, p. 254.

49) Tobit 3 : 8, Ringgren, p. 316. This last function is stressed more in Rabbinical literature.

50) Trans R. H. Charles, in R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha of the Old Testament*, Oxford, reprinted 1964 (hereafter cited as 'Charles'), vol. II. p. 49.

51) Testament of Levi 18 : 12, Charles, p. 315.

52) Testament of Dan 5 : 10 f., Charles, p. 334.

53) Mark 3 : 23 ff.

54) Colossians 2 : 15.

If one accepts, with Eichrodt,[55]) that Iran was a source of influence in the shaping of Jewish demonology the matter cannot rest here, for, as Eichrodt again notes, the increase in demonology in late Judaism is symptomatic of 'a radical change in man's feelings about the world.' [56]). Influence at this point, therefore, implies influence at the heart of a modified or developed theology and might be expected to show itself in other doctrines as well.

The Saviour and the Resurrection.

The resurrection doctrine is another late and important innovation in the Jewish faith. It may be contained in the Little Apocalypse inserted in the book of Isaiah, chapters 24-27, variously dated between the second and fourth centuries B.C. [57]). The belief does appear in Daniel 12 but not, interestingly, in association with the Son of Man in chapter 7.

There is no unity of tradition in the inter-testamental literature. The author of I Maccabees (c. 100 B.C.) [58]) does not seem to accept the doctrine, [59]) nor do the writers of I Baruch (second century B.C.) [60]) and Judith (mid second century B.C.) [61]) nor did the Sadducees. The position of the Qumram sect on this point is not clear. If the resurrection was part of their faith, then they kept very quiet about it. Only a few passages can be interpreted as referring to the resurrection, and these are very ambiguous. [62]). Among those who held such a belief

---

55) *Theology*, II, p. 209 He adds that the Persian belief in 'the eternity of the evil as well as the good spirit, at no time became proper to the concept of Satan.' It is not true to say that the evil spirit is eternal in Iran. The texts quoted above show that the evil spirit has an end, as Eichrodt's source, E. Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*, London, 1949, p. 63, recognises.

56) p. 227.

57) Eissfeldt, p. 325, Frost, p. 154; Russell, pp. 367 f.; Ringgren, p. 322; R. H. Charles, *Eschatology, The Doctrine of a Future Life*, reprinted New York, 1963, p. 132.

58) Eissfeldt, p. 579; R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times*, London, 1949, p. 491; B. M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, Oxford, 1957, p. 130.

59) So W. Bousset and H. Gressman, *Die Religion des Judentums*, reprinted Tubingen, 1966, p. 273.

60) Eissfeldt, p. 593; Pfeiffer, pp. 413 ff.

61) Eissfeldt, p. 587; Metzger, p. 43; Pfeiffer, p. 297.

62) See for example Russell, pp. 373 ff; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Pelican, 1962, p. 51.

there was no unity of teaching. II Maccabees (c. 100 B.C.) teaches a resurrection of the righteous only, [63]) as do the Psalms of Solomon (dated mid-first century B.C.). [64]). In different passages the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and I Enoch both include the contradictory ideas of the resurrection of the righteous only, and the resurrection of all men. [65]). Some texts have no resurrection of the body, but instead the immortality of the soul.

The evidence suggests, therefore, that at the time of Christ there was no uniform interpretation of the resurrection doctrine even among those who held the belief. This implies that the doctrine was in its infancy. Again it is important to note the remark of Eichrodt that the doctrine of the resurrection came into Judaism at a time of 'neurotic anxiety'. [66]). It arose in answer to a theological need which in turn was provoked by the traumatic experience of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Whilst some of the 'raw material' for the symbolism may have been at hand in the Jewish heritage, much was not, and the question has to be asked, to what extent did the Jews, in their search for an answer to a desperate problem, look to outside sources for guidance in teaching and imagery?'

In view of the variety of inter-testamental traditions the unity of the New Testament tradition on the doctrine of the resurrection is, perhaps, surprising. [67]). Although two passages in Luke, 14:14 'the resurrection of the just' and 20:36 'sons of the resurrection' do sound like a doctrine of the resurrection of the just, the general teaching of the New Testament is of a physical resurrection of all men at the end of the world. [68]) Although it is God who raises the dead in I Cor. 6:14 it is 'at the coming of the Lord' i.e. the saviour, that the dead are raised, I Cor. 15:23. John, at least, develops this so that it is the Son of Man who raises the dead. John 5:28

---

63) 6 : 26; 7 : 9, 14, 36; 12 : 43 f; 14 : 46. On dating see Eissfeldt, p. 581; Metzger, p. 141.

64) Eissfeldt, p. 613; Russell, pp. 57 f.

65) On the resurrection of the righteous only Test. of Simeon 6:7; Judah 25 : 7 f and I Enoch 46 . 6. On the resurrection of all men Test. of Benjamin 10 : 8 and I Enoch 51 : 1.

66) p. 509 and Volz, p. 232.

67) This unity cannot be explained simply in terms of the belief in the resurrection of Christ. It is true that Paul links the two in I Cor. 15, but, as the Corinthians saw, there is no necessary connection between the two.

68) Mt. 22:23 f; Jn. 11:24; Acts 17:32; I Cor. 6:14; I Thess. 4:16.

> ... the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his (i.e. the Son of Man's) voice and come forth.

That this is not only a reference to the Lazarus episode, but also to the eschatological resurrection is shown by the words which follow:

> those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and
> those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement.

Similary in Jn. 6:54 Jesus declares:

> I will raise him up at the last day.

The background to this development is not clear. In the inter-testamental literature the earliest text to speak of the dead being raised at the advent of the Messiah is II Baruch 30:1 second half of the first century A.D.) which may be subject to Christian influence.[69]). In I Enoch 51:1-3 the resurrection is said to occur in the days when the Elect One arises, *if* one accepts Charles' transposition of verse 5a to the end of verse 1,[70]) but that is far from certain. Unless this transposition is made the passage simply refers to the resurrection without relating it to the arrival of the Saviour. There is, therefore, no earlier evidence for the association of the Saviour with the resurrection than the New Testament.

The Saviour and the Judgement Scene

The idea of a final judgement of those who oppose the will of God is an old one in Israelite belief. Precisely how old does not matter here, it is sufficient to notice that it occurs in Isaiah 3. The general belief was in a judgement of the nations who opposed Israel, and in the establishment of God's chosen nation, Israel. Some of the prophets, Amos 5:8 for example, condemned blind hope in this, and warned that it would be a day of darkness and not of light.

The inter-testamental literature generally stresses the forensic character of the judgement scene in terms unlike the Old Testament.[71]). Some books retain the idea of the establishment of the nation of Israel

---

69) Eissfeldt, p. 630; Russell, pp. 64 f; Volz, p. 255.
70) *Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha*, II, p. 218.
71) See Russell, p. 383.

(e.g. the Psalms of Solomon) [72]) but the tendency becomes more and more to stress the judgement of the individual, as in IV Ezra (latter part of the first century A.D.). [73]) The Judgement scene is now given a cosmic setting, not only men and nations being judged, but also fallen angels and demons (I En. 16 : 1), the prince of demons himself (I En. 10:6), even the sun and moon (I En. 18:13 ff.). In the Old Testament God himself is always the judge (Gen. 18 : 25, Isa. 33 : 22, Ps. 94 : 2), and this is so in Daniel 7, in much of the inter-testamental literature (I En. 47 : 3, 90, Sib. Or. 4 : 41, 72 IV Ezra 7 : 33), and in the teaching of many of the rabbis. [74]) The difference, however, is that the saviour can also act as judge. This idea is best represented in the Similitudes of Enoch. In ch. 46 it is the Son of Man with the 'One who had a head of days' who carried out the judgement, in 49 : 4 it is the Elect One, and in 61 : 8 it is said:

> And the Lord of Spirits placed the Elect One on the throne of glory.
> And he shall judge all the works of the holy above in heaven,
> And in the balance shall their deeds be weighed. [75])

In 41:1 this judgement is extended to men. In II Baruch 40:1, 72:2, IV Ezra 12:33 and the Targum on Isaias 53 it is the Messiah who administers judgement.

The New Testament follows the tradition of the inter-testamental literature, with regard to the cosmic setting, the forensic character of the judgement and the confusion over who is judge. Thus God is judge in James 4 : 12 and Acts 10 : 42, and the saviour in a number of other passages. So in Mt. 13:41 the Son of Man sends out his angels to gather together causes of sin and evil-doers and they are thrown into the furnace of fire. He sits on his glorious throne and separates the sheep from the goats in Mt. 25:31, he repays every man for what he has done (Mt. 16:22) and in Jn. 5:27 Jesus is given authority to judge because he is Son of Man. Jesus is also called judge in James 5:9, I Pet. 4:5 and II Tim. 4:1.

---

72) See also I En. 38 : 1; 62: 1 ff; Sibylline Oracles 3 : 742.
73) Eissfeldt, p. 626; Russell, p. 62.
74) Volz, p. 274; Russell, p. 383.
75) Charles, II, p. 226.

Conclusion

This study is, of necessity, a limited one, but certain points have emerged. The development in the eschatological imagery in the intertestamental period, a development which is usually attributed, in part at least, to Iranian influence, involves a corresponding development in the concept of the saviour: he is said to defeat the demons, the dead are raised at his coming or by him, and he introduces and administers the eschatological judgement. Precisely the same functions are carried out by the Zoroastrian saviour Sōšyant, and since the apocalyptic setting of both is so similar one might reasonably conclude that the development in the Judeo-Christian saviour imagery is indebted to Iranian influence.

One point should be noted. There does not seem to be one Jewish or Christian figure which has been taken over *in toto*. The influence is of a more fragmentary nature than has sometimes been suggested. [75a]) It is spread over a number of figures: the priestly saviour and his defeat of the demons, the Elect One as judge, and the resurrection of the dead at the coming of the Son of Man or Messiah. It is in the New Testament that the various functions are attributed to one figure. It should also be noted that the effect of the influence has not been to introduce a new or alien idea, but rather to develop and modify of existing concepts. Thus the Messiah, who originally suppressed the enemies of Israel and established God's own nation, now defeats the forces of evil, and at his coming men are raised to share in God's kingdom. One cannot understand the developed idea without looking *both* at the Old Testament *and* at the source of influence, Iran. Indeed, there is a third factor to be taken into account before a proper understanding of the development can be gained — the historical situation.

The Historical Background

A study of the historical background to the question of influence deserves far more attention than it is usually accorded, for two reasons. In the first place, although one must stress the Old Testament background to the developed imagery, the development is nevertheless a major one involving the adaptation of a new mythology. But religions do not cast off and take on new mythologies lightly. Myths are not

75a) e.g. by the 'History of Religious School'.

simply 'Purely fictitious narrative', [76]) they are condensed symbols expressing men's deepest feelings about the world in which they live. They are

> told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements. [77])

They are expressive of men's innermost religious convictions and practices. To think of *any* religious group exchanging myths as minstrels might traditional songs is to misunderstand completely the character of myth. They are not stories that can be neatly lifted from one system and transferred to another without affecting the framework of the latter. In arguing for the influence of one religion or culture upon another it is important to take into account the circumstances and conditions under which such influence was possible and likely. Hence the importance of Eichrodt's observations that the increase in demonology in late Judaism is symptomatic of 'a radical change in man's feelings about the world', and that the resurrection doctrine appeared in Judaism at a time of 'neurotic anxiety.'

The second reason why the historical background should be given more attention is that all the elements of the developed saviour imagery which have been noted occur in books dating from the end of the second century B.C. and later, yet it is generally assumed that the period of influence was that of the Achaemenids, that is between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. While it cannot be denied that there may have been influence at this time, why should the influence of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic become more marked in the second and particularly the first century B.C.? Granted that the historical circumstances favoured the growth of apocalyptic at the time, and that influence takes a long time to become effective, the problem still remains, why did it take 150-200 years of *Greek* rule for the *Zoroastrian* Saviour Imagery to percolate through? This point has led Glasson to doubt the extent to which Jewish Apocalyptic was influenced by Zoroastrianism. [78]) The popular theory of some kind of 'deep freeze' for these

---

76) The Oxford English Dictionary definition.

77) B. Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* quoted by M. Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, London, 1963, p. 20.

78) T. F. Glasson, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology*, London, 1961, p. 1 Eichrodt, *Theology*, takes a similar position. Frost, p. 225 notes the date of the Jewish developments and suggests that Iranian influence was conveyed to Northern Palestine by 'Chaldeanism'.

ideas, or of the preservation of the beliefs in circles for whose existence no evidence has been adduced, is not convincing. Unless some historical explanation of this phenomenon can be given the theory of influence must remain, at best, doubtful.

Some account of the history of the first two centuries B.C. must be given. It will be easier to begin by considering the Jewish/Iranian contacts in this period. Professor Widengren has noted the many points of contact that took place between the Parthians, who ruled Iran from the third century B.C. onwards, and the Jews. [79]) The period of contacts may go as far back as the beginning of the Seleucid rule in Palestine, since the Seleucids also ruled over Parthia, and both the Jews and the Parthians were seeking to throw off the Seleucid yoke at the same time. Indeed Professor Neusner has pointed to a series of instances where an uprising by one nation provided the other with the most timely relief. [80]) For example the Jewish rebellion between 170 and 160 B.C. eased pressure on Mithridates I when he was seeking to gain his nation's independence from the Seleucids. On the other hand the Jews were assisted by the attack of Phraates II on Antiochus Sidetes in 129 B.C. Another example is the assault of Hyrcanus on Syrian cities whilst Antiochus was attacking Parthia. Opportunism may explain the odd coincidence, but in view of the number of coincidences one may suspect, with Neusner and Downey, some kind of *entente* between the two nations. [81])

The evidence for the contacts between the two in the first century B.C. is much less speculative. There is a reference to Parthian ambassadors visiting Jerusalem during the reign of Alexander Janneus (103-78 B.C.) and these ambassadors mention previous visits that they had made. [82]) Contacts between the two reached a climax in the period 54-38 B.C. To appreciate the significance of the contacts it is necessary to consider the state of the Jews in the Roman Empire at that time.

---

79) *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbewegung in parthischer Zeit*, Cologne, 1960. (AGF Nordrhein-West. Geisteswiss. Reihe, 70) *passim*, a development of his 'Quelques rapports entre juifs et iraniens à l'époque des Parthes,' *Vetus Testamentum*, supplement IV, 1957, pp. 197-241.

80) *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, vol. I, The Parthian Period, Leiden, 1965, p. 24.

81) Neusner, p. xii; G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton, 1961, p. 126.

82) Neusner, p. 25.

During the first century B.C., in particular from the time of Pompey, the Roman rule in Syria generally had been hard. The gentle and conciliatory acts of Julius Caesar were soon nullified by the exactions and cruelty of Gabienus, and the taxes of Anthony.[83]) But the acts of Crassus in 54 B.C. left the Jews even more disaffected with Rome than ever. In that year Crassus wintered his forces in Syria before marching against the Parthians. Not only did his forces ravage the land but he himself went further than even Pompey had done, in that he invaded the Temple and also stole the Temple treasure. Within a matter of months, on the sixth of May 53 B.C., to use the Julian calendar, he took his army to Carrhae and although his troops outnumbered the Parthians 3:1, he suffered a defeat on a scale almost unparallelled in Roman history; only 10,000 of the original 44,000 troops returning alive.[84]) While it is speculation, it is not unreasonable speculation, to say that this may well have appeared to the Jews as the hand of God at work. Their hopes must surely have been high for a Parthian invasion and a repetition of the Messianic role of Cyrus.[85]) These hopes would be fanned by the unpopularity of the Roman-supported Idumaean king of Jerusalem — Herod. He was not eligible for the throne; he flouted the Jewish law by summarily having a brigand put do death on his own authority, and not by decree of the Sanhedrin; and he actually led an army against Jerusalem itself to avenge the insult of being tried by a special court for flouting the Jewish law.[86]) The looked-for Parthian invasion came in 40 B.C. It is indicative of the Jewish feeling towards the invasion that the Parthians delayed their final assault on Jerusalem until the Passover so that they could receive the help of the pilgrims.[87]) After the expulsion of the Romans from Palestine a Hasmonean was placed on the throne, Mattathias Antigonus, and following the policy of their Achaemenid forbears, the Parthians withdrew.

---

83) On the nature of the Roman rule see Downey, pp. 158 n74, 159. E. Schürer *A History of the Jewish People,* Edinburgh, 1885-1890, E.T. by various translators Division I, vol. 1, p. 339. On Gabienus see Dio Cassius 39: 55 f and Schurer, op. cit., pp. 330 f. On the greed of Crassus see F.-M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, Paris, 1952, vol. 1, p. 298 and Cambridge Ancient History (hereafter C. A. H.), vol. IX, pp. 403 f. On Anthony see Appian, Civil Wars, 5 : 7.

84) For details and sources see C. A. H. IX, pp. 606-612.

85) Isa. 45 : 1.

86) C. A. H. IX, pp. 404 f.

87) Josephus, *Antiquities,* XIV, 13, 4.

Although the period of Jewish independence was short, only two years, one can imagine the effect this must have had on their hopes and aspirations. The fact that these hopes were never fulfilled would in no way dampen their aspirations since at that time the outlook was promising, for the Parthians made repeated attempts during the following hundred years to invade again. Just as there was a pro-Hellenic movement during the reign of the Seleucids, so it can be supposed that before, during and after the Parthian invasion there would be a pro-Parthian party in Jerusalem. Perhaps it was among such circles that Apocalyptic speculation flourished. The historical circumstances would certainly favour religious influence. An attempt to enforce one's own religion usually meets stubborn opposition, but a period of co-operation to liberate a country is perhaps more likely to stimulate an exchange of ideas, providing the ground is prepared — as it was by the long period of Achaemenid rule. In particular the historical situation would favour the exchange of Apocalyptic beliefs, of speculation about the coming of God's kingdom and the overthrow of evil, and thereby of saviour imagery.

There is another important way in which Parthian influence might make itself felt on Jewish, and later on Christian apocalyptic thought, and that is through the Diaspora. Scholars have increasingly recognised the inter-action of Diaspora and Palestinian Judaism. [88]) It is therefore very important to note the many points of contact of the Parthians with the Jewish Diaspora. Such contacts can be seen in Parthia itself, in Babylonia, Adiabene, Syria (in Palmyra and Damascus for example), Commagene, Armenia, Pontus, Cappadocia and Cilicia. [89]). To take but one example — that of Pontus: there were trade contacts between Palestine and Pontus from an early time [90]) and there are specific mentions of the Jewish communities there in the Parthian period. Philo, for example, mentions such a community, [91]) and he is supported by Acts which lists people from Pontus at Pentecost in 2 : 9, and in 18 : 2 mention is made of Aquila, a Jew of Pontus. I Peter 1 : 1 also refers either to a Jewish community of Pontus, or perhaps more likely, to

88) For example W. D. Davies, *New Peake,* p. 687.

89) For Bibliography see Hinnells, 'Christianity and the Mystery Cults,' *Theology,* vol. 71. no 571, January, 1968, pp. 23 f.

90) C. A. H. IX, p. 212.

91) See Schurer, II. II, p. 226, n. 21.

an early Christian community there. On the other hand while it was inevitably under Hellenistic influence, particularly the area around the Black Sea, Pontus was also an important centre of Iranian culture. It was founded by a Persian noble sometime in the fourth century B.C. [92]) and the names of the kings, particularly the number of Mithridatae, (a name meaning, of course, 'the gift of' or 'given by Mithra') implies that this character was not forgotten. Mithridates Eupator laid great stress on his alleged descent from Cyrus and Darius, and he claimed to have inherited some of these kings' valuable treasures. [93]) Whether or not these were valid claims is an irrelevant question — the point is that they illustrate the cultural, and presumably religious, inclinations of Mithridates. His children were also given Persian names, for example, Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes. [94]) Strabo reports that the Iranian goddess Anāhitā was worshipped there, as was Omanos, that is, Ahura Mazda. [95]) The Iranian element in the character of Pontus received fresh impetus in the first century B.C. not only from the rebellion of Mithridates Eupator against Rome, but also from the Parthians who invaded Pontus at the same time that they invaded Palestine, i.e. 40 B.C.

Hence the Jewish contact with the Parthians was not limited to one isolated invasion of short duration, but was an important feature throughout a long period of history. Thus Zoroastrianism was not a dead force of the past, but a living faith encountered in many places by the Jews in the first century B.C. It was also encountered in the most favourable circumstances, not only as the religion of the liberating forces, but also as the faith of a man who instigated an enormous and almost successful revolt against Rome. Professor Neusner writes:

> There can be no doubt whatever that the Parthian government and the Jewish community of Babylonia, and that in Palestine as well, worked together consistently, frequently, and in substantial and important ways to oppose Seleucid, and then Roman hegemony in the Mesopotamian valley. [96])

---

92) C. A. H. IX, p. 216.

93) Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*, 112, and Polybius, *The Histories*, V, 43, 2 record his claims to be descended from Darius, and Appian, *Wars* 115 refers to his claim concerning the treasure.

94) Appian, *Wars*, 64, 111, 117.

95) *Geography*, XII, 3, 37 and XV, 3, 15 respectively.

96) op. cit. p. xii.

What Professor Neusner here writes of the Mesopotamian valley may therefore be extended to a much wider area. And a further implication could arise from this. The Parthian culture was firmly established in centres into which the Early Church moved, and it had been there for a long time. Hence is is *historically* possible that, contrary to the usual assertion, Zoroastrian influence may have been conveyed directly to early Christian Apocalyptic without the mediation of Jewish thought. This *may* be important in the case of the Book of Revelation, and other elements of the saviour imagery, but this requires a further study.

To sum up: the influence of Zoroastrian Eschatology on the Judaeo-Christian tradition is likely to have included the influence of the saviour figure. This influence is to be seen particularly in the saviour's defeat of the demons, his gathering of men for the judgement scene, his raising of the dead, and his administration of the judgement. It is noteworthy that these elements occur for the first time in the Jewish tradition at a date later than Daniel 7, i.e. in the Inter-testamental literature and more clearly in the New Testament. This suggests that influence took place at a later date than is usually suggested, and that the occasion for it lay in the Jewish-Parthian contacts which began in the second century B.C., but which came to a climax in the middle of the first century B.C.The conditions of this period, the raising of Apocalyptic hopes first by the Seleucid and Roman oppression and then by the Parthian liberation, would explain why the answer to the Jewish anxieties was given in a developed mythological form under the influence of a sympathetic ally.

THE HIGH GOD AMONG THE ZINZA OF NORTHWESTERN TANZANIA [1]).

BY

SVEIN BJERKE

Oslo

1. In the context of this paper 'Zinza' refers to the dominant section — some 20.000 individuals in all — of the population of the former chiefdom of Rusubi in the Biharamulo District to the southwest of Lake Victoria in Tanzania (2). The Zinza who were traditionally organized in several chiefdoms, are part of the group of Bantu-speaking peoples referred to as the Interlacustrine Bantu who inhabit the area between the great lakes of East Africa. Within this group they are particularly closely related to the western subgroup which comprises the Haya of Tanzania, and the Nyoro, Toro, and Ankole of Uganda.

The Zinza are subsistence hoe cultivators living mainly on a diet of plantains and beans, though cassava, maize, and millet (for beer making) are also important foodstuffs. Most families own some goats and chickens, but sheep are rare and few families today own cows.

Each 'family' (*eka*, pl. *amaka*), today often an elementary family although patrilineally extended and polygynous families are by no means rare, live in one or more mud-and-wattle houses standing in a holding of plantains and surrounded by other food-gardens. A number of homesteads make up a 'village' (*kyaro*). Within this unit each family head (*nyineka*) stands in the centre of a circle of neighbours with whom close ties of friendship and cooperation are maintained. The Zinza are further organized in a large number of patrilineal, exogamic 'totemic' and widely dispersed clans (*ruganda*; pl. *nganda*), each of

---

1) The material on which this paper is based was collected in Biharamulo between May 1966 and June 1967 while the writer was holding a scholarship from the Norwegian Research Counsil (NAVF) besides being a Research Associate at the East African Institute of Social Research (EAISR), Makerere.

2) It should also be noted that the Zinza of Rusubi call themselves Subi and are thus referred to by others, while the term Zinza is primarily used of the Zinza population of Geita District which is traditionally called Buzinza, 'Zinzaland'.

which may comprise both *huma* and *iru* subclans (*kitako*; pl. *bitako*), the former used to be an exclusively pastoral 'noble' class (*nfura*), while the *iru* are 'commoners' and cultivators. The distinction and social distance between these classes are formally expressed through strict rules against intermarriage and commensality, rules which are now becoming obsolete. The *huma* too are mainly cultivators today.

At the present time the Zinza religion is a system of ideas and practices especially concerned with providing an answer to the existential question of the meaning of suffering. Sickness, death and other misfortunes and the physical and mental suffering which they imply, are generally thought to have a personal source, either some spiritual being or a fellow man using magic. Misfortunes are thought to be symptoms of the unwanted presence of these mystical powers, a presence which implies a reduction of ontological status expressed as a loss of 'power' (amani) in the person attacked and in most cases in his domestic group as well. A family in which mystical powers have intervened in this way is thus considered to have 'dirt' (*miyanda*), i.e. they are religiously impure. The idea of how this impurity orginates, what the consequences are for those who are in this state, and how this state is changed by ritual means into that of 'purity' or 'whiteness' (*obwera*) are therefore essential to the understanding of Zinza religion.

Apart from the use of the power inherent in magical substances there are three categories of spiritual beings that are believed to bring misfortunes. In most homesteads one finds shrines established for these spirits with which the domestic group thus has regular cultic relations. It is, however, the spirits with which a cultic relationship is lacking that are feared most as they are believed to kill without scruples people who do not belong to 'their' family. The three categories of spirits are, firstly, the 'ancestors' (*mizimu*), i.e. the dead father and father's father and usually others who used to be close agnates of the family head; secondly, many clans have a clan-spirit (*musambwa*) which is usually common to all the members of a clan and is thought to be the clan-founder or some other remote ancestor. Unlike the other spirits the *musambwa* manifests itself in the shape of some animal, usually a snake or leopard. The third category of spirits the *backwezi* is the one which is the most important today. This category comprises the spirits of chiefs and their followers from a remote past. The *bachwezi* may be split up into two groups. One of these comprises the 'old' *bachwezi*,

which should rather be called *mbandwa* — this is the old term — to distinguish them from the more recent *bachwezi* which people claim mainly came from Buhaya to the north of Rusubi from the second half of the last century onwards and their number is still increasing. While the old *mbandawa*, such as Lyangombe their 'leader' (*mukuru*), Mugasa, the spirit of the lakes and rivers, wind and rain, Irungu, the master of the wild animals, and Kihazi and Nyabayombe which are associated with the cultivation and growth of food crops also had a positive function in that they could grant man the three standard values of health, children and riches, the new *bachwezi* are not believed to contribute to the well-being of man but only to bring misfortunes. These spirits of a demonic nature today provide the pattern on which spirits of all categories are conceived of. The belief in the beneficient influence of the *mizimu,* the *misambwa,* and the *mbandwa* is now rapidly disappearing and there is a marked tendency to think of them all as demonic beings.

Today the traditional religion coexists with Christianity in the area. More than one third of the population as a whole are Christians, the overwhelming majority of them being Roman Catholics, but there are also a few Anglicans (Church Missionary Society) and a very few Pentecostals. In the central parts of the chiefdom, moreover, the Roman Catholics far outnumber the pagans. The oldest mission, a Catholic mission of the White Fathers, was established near the chief's residence shortly after the turn of the century and Christianity has thus been known directly for more than sixty years. This naturally makes it difficult today to describe with precision the content of the traditional idea of the High God. Today everyone thinks that there is only one god, though the names used may vary with the different peoples or religions. In Rusubi, the current name for God today even among the pagans, is Mungu, which is an old Bantu name for the High God, though the name is not native to Rusubi. When people consequently use the word Mungu one cannot on the evidence of the use of the name decide whether it refers to the traditional High God, or the Christian, (or to Allah, as there are also a few Muslims in the area), as these are all considered to be the same deity. The identification of the traditional High God with the Christian god was encouraged by the early Catholic missionaries who also for some time used the traditional name for the High God, Nyamuhanga, to denote the Christian god. The idea that there is only one god who may have different names must

imply that the specific conceptions of god originally denoted by the different names may have reached a new, though unstable, synthesis. Mungu is thus a deity which combines some of the old ideas with the new ones disseminated through the missions and in later years by other agencies as well. We should bear this point in mind in what follows. I do not aspire to consider the High God of the Zinza as he was conceived of before there were any contacts with Christianity, but can only state how pagans think of this deity today or what they thought in the recent past, and try to outline the position of the High God in the traditional religion of the Zinza as it exists at the present time.

2. Today people will use indiscriminately several names for the High God. Apart from Mungu, which is the most common name today among pagans, Christians, and Muslims alike, I have also heard the traditional name Imana, commonly used by the southern subgroup of the Interlacustrine peoples (Ruanda, Rundi, Ha). Among the Zinza the High God is traditionally called Nyamuhanga, or alternatively Isewahanga, while the form Ruhanga, which is in common use among other Interlacustrine peoples is also well known. These three names are all related to *kuhanga*, 'to create' and thus describe the High God as 'the creator'. Like the name for the High God in many other African languages this one is clearly a derivative, and what is equally important, its derivation is consciously recognized by the Zinza themselves.

In referring to the traditional High God two other names may also be used, Rugaba and Kazoba. These names too, have a clear meaning. Rugaba is derived from *kugaba*, 'to give' and Kazoba from *izoba*, the sun, the names may be translated 'the giver' and 'the Sun', somehow thought of as a person. Rugaba and Kazoba are not, however, just two more names for the High God. Though they may be used separately they form part of the series Nyamuhanga-Kazoba-Rugaba and in prayers and appeals to the High God he is often addressed in this way. The series as a whole is the linguistic equivalent of 'Mungu' or 'Imana'. This is illustrated in the following quotation from a text written for me by a Christian,

> Even before the Europeans came people knew that Mungu existed... The work of Nyamuhanga Rugaba Kazoba was to free people from diseases. Mungu created people through his mercy and he created plants in order that people may feed on them.

In the following extract (also written by a Christian) the three names are thought to refer to three separate deities,

> In the old days Mungu was known as Rugaba, Kazoba, and Nyamuhanga to whom they used to go to pray at the *mumande*-tree. It was Nyamuhanga who created men together with Rugaba and Kazoba. They created everything else that is in this world.

Though a few people said that they used to believe in three different gods denoted by these names, this is not the universal belief. Most people stressed that there was only one god who could be referred to by this series of three names, or by one of them. It is thus not a question of a trinity of a tritheistic kind and when people use e.g. the name Rugaba they do not imply that there exists a divine being, Rugaba which is distinct as a separate deity from Kazoba and Nyamuhanga. But neither is it a question of a mere 'nominal' trinity as Nyamuhanga, Rugaba, and Kazoba imply more than alternative use of names. Though people will say that the names all refer to the same god, they will also insist that they refer to three deities saying that they are one, but Nyamuhanga is the greatest of them. The three terms can be shown to express three different aspects of the nature of the High God, so that when one uses one name rather than another this is dependent on which aspect of the High God one wishes to draw attention to. But more is usually implied than this selective use of names for the different aspects or characteristics of the High God; and it seems fairly clear that we are dealing with a modalistic trinity of some kind. Among pagans this is expressed by the statement, that they are one but different, but as the trinity idea is implicit and not a conscious article of faith its verbalization is made difficult. Christians, however, readily identify the three terms with those of the Christian trinity.

> The word Mungu was not known in the old days because this word was brought by the Swahili people. People in the old days knew of Kazoba as, so to speak, the great god, and Isewahanga as the second, and Rugaba as the third. This corresponds to the modern doctrine as follows: God the Father is Kazoba, God the Son is Isewahanga, and the Holy Ghost is Rugaba. So they used to address God (Mungu) as Kazoba Isewahanga Rugaba.

Today it is common knowledge among Christians that Nyamuhanga is the same as Patri, the Father — the common important characteristics being their creative activities — and that Kazoba is Mwana, the Son,

and Rugaba Mwoyo Mutakatifu, the Holy Ghost. (The man from whom the above quotation is taken had made the 'wrong' identifications). This identification of the different modalities of the traditional High God with the members of the Christian trinity was encouraged by the missionaries, and there is little doubt that people today — Christians and pagans alike — do think of the traditional High God as a plurality in oneness. Whether the trinity idea is traditional of whether it is a result of Christian missionary activity in the area is another question to which we will return later.

3. The more important characteristics of the traditional High God can be shown to belong to one or other of his modalities or 'persons'.

Nyamuhanga, or alternatively Isewahanga and Ruhanga, is the creator. Nyamuhanga and Ruhanga only differ in the form of the prefixes used to form a proper noun from the verb *kuhanga*, and the name means 'the creator'. The name 'Isewahanga', on the other hand is a little different. This name was said to be the equivalent of 'tata omuhangi', 'my father, the creator' (*ise*, 'his (or her) father'; *tata*, 'my father') the name of the High God thus being combined with the word for 'father'. While Nyamuhanga and Ruhanga as names give expression to the idea of the High God as creator without any further specifications, 'Isewahanga' is understood to be the creator with special reference to the creation of men. It should be noted that 'father' in this context means *genitor* rather than *pater*. The High God is the creator of all men, but he takes little 'fatherly' interest in them once they have been created. While the very names used stress the role of the High God as creator, some further information can be elicited from the meaning of the verb *kuhanga* which I have translated 'to create'. This word has a restricted meaning and does not refer to just any kind of 'creation' like the act of producing something from or organizing some pre-existent material. It is not used of the common human activities when something is made, and can not, for instance be used of the activity of a potter, an activity with which creation is often compared in other parts of Africa (Millroth, 1965: 54-5). *Kuhanga* means to 'bring something into existence by a word of command', an activity which is dependent on the 'power' (*amani*) of the creator. The verb is only used to refer to the creative activity of Nyamuhanga, and to the analogically 'creative' activities of the chief (*mukama*). The chief was regarded as the representative of the High God on earth and was that

being who, next to the High God, had the greatest 'power'. His 'command' (*muhango*) based as it was on his 'power', could bring about a change in the existing conditions. As he had to delegate some of his authority to the lesser territorial chiefs (*batwale*; sing. *mutwale*), these could also be said to *hanga* on the understanding that they represented the 'power' of the *mukama*.

Some traditional proverbs also illustrates the creativeness and power of Nyamuhanga. 'Nyamuhanga is the one who creates all things' (*Nyamuhanga niwe ahanga ebintu byona*). It is significant that the verb form here used and which is the one commonly used in proverbs, is the form which expresses the iterative or habitual action. The use of this verb form implies that the creative activities of Nyamuhanga did not end with the creation of the world and of man, but that he is still creating. He is not only thought to have created man in the beginning; he also creates every new human being. He creates — though some people here will say forms or moulds (*kubumba*) in the manner of a potter — the embryo and gives it a 'life-soul' (*muganya*) while it is still in the father who during coitus transfers the embryo to the mother, who provides it with nourishment and a place in which to grow.

This proverb is supplemented by another, 'Nyamuhanga is the one who destroys all things' (*Nyamuhanga niwe ahangurura ebintu byona*). As everything is brought into existence and this existence is maintained by Nyamuhanga, he is also the one who destroys parts of his own creation, and people here naturally think first and foremost of the deaths of human beings. The idea that Nyamuhanga takes the lives of men is expressed in the figure of 'Death' (*Rufu*) who is the 'servant' of God who sends him down to earth whenever a man is about to die. Death is brought about by Rufu when he removes the 'life-soul', originally given by Nyamuhanga, from the dying man. [3])

A third proverb gives expression to the idea of the supreme power of the High God; 'Nyamuhanga is not ruled by anything' (*Nyamuhanga talemwa kantu*). 'Rule' must here be understood in the sense of 'be too much for' or 'not succeed'. That he is not 'ruled by anything' thus means that no task is too great for him, that if he wants to do

3) Though a man is always 'killed' by God he will also (unless he is a very old man) be killed by one on the spirits or by magic, and his death may have been brought about by drowning. There may thus be three levels of 'causes' recognized in a given instance.

something nothing can prevent him and he is thus thought to be omnipotent. In this connection something should be said of the idea of 'power' (*amani*) which is the key word in the 'ontology' of this people. Existence is inconceivable without *amani* and everything that is to exist must have *amani* to some extent. The soil, vegetation, stones, animals and men must have 'power' as only that which has power can exist. But things have varying degrees of power. Stones have considerable power as they are 'heavy' and durable. Some plants, like the banana-plant with its striking regenerative properties, have more 'power' than most other plants. In the social sphere the *mukama* was clearly the one who had the greatest 'power' and the hierarchical structure of the traditional society was envisaged in terms of 'power', those nearer the apex having more than those at the bottom, i.e. the *mukama,* and also a *huma* existed more fully than a commoner. As mentioned in the first section, men will lose 'power' when they have been struck down with illness or when some misfortune has befallen them, a loss of 'power' which is expressed in ideas of impurity and impurity connotes death, i.e. nonexistence. The source of all 'power' is the High God who is said 'to rule' all 'power', the 'power' of men and things is dependent on the 'power' of Nyamuhanga who thus is the reality which has ontological independence.

Though people will say that Nyamuhanga created the world and man by word of command, there is no further information to be obtained as to how this was done. What we would have liked to have in this connection is clearly some kind of cosmogony. I did not find a coherent cosmogony among the Zinza and this lack of interest in cosmogony is usual in the Interlacustrine area [4]) and indeed in Africa generally (Baumann, 1936 : 185). Some mythical motifs could, however, be found. The traditional cosmology considers the sky to be a solid vault of rock created by Nyamuhanga, to which the stars are fastened like lamps to a ceiling, and which covers the earth like a lid. There is a belief that there is a 'country' (*ensi*) above the sky, and this country is thought to be a replica of the known land below. In the beginning these two lands were lying close together. We can here recognize the widespread motif of a close connection which in the beginning is thought to

4) There are exceptions. See Rhese, 1910 : 125, for the Ziba (a Haya chiefdom), and Fisher, 1911 : 69 ff, for a much more detailed 'myth' of the Nyoro.

have existed between sky and earth. It is also said that Nyamuhanga lifted the sky to its present place. This motif is, however, not linked with any myths, or remnants of myths expressing how man as he exists at the present time was conditioned by the event of the separation of sky and earth. People maintained that man was created after this separation and the closeness of sky and earth is thus not associated with some kind of 'paradisal' existence which came to an end with the withdrawal of the sky. This may, of course, have been different in the past; at least the closely related Nyoro do have a myth of this type (Fisher, 1911 : 69 ff.).

As to the origin of mankind there is a widespread belief in the Interlacustrine area that the first man or human couple originated in the sky and were placed on earth by the High God, or fell down from the sky (Baumann, 1936 : 208). In a couple of tales I collected the motif of falling down from the sky was used, and one man told me:

> In the sky there is a land just like this one. There are people there but they have tails like cows and chickens. A very long time ago such a man with a tail dropped down from the sky. When his tail was cut off he became just like an ordinary man.

Though this was not by the informant considered to be a myth in the technical sense of a 'true' story offering an understanding of how something began to exist, it was stated that people believed in it in the past. Though the High God is thought of as the originator of men and people may have believed that the first man fell down from the sky associated with him, he does not seem to be implied at all in another tale which tells of the origin of death.

> There is a story of the old days which says that when people died and were buried they after some time and often on the same day, came out again alive. Now a Musingo once struck the grave of a man who had just died with a stick and said that dead men should not come out of their graves. The dead man did not and neither did people who died after this time. Formerly, therefore, the Basingo were not liked, they were despised, they were bad people. A Musingo was killed as a sacrifice at the building of a new house for the chief.

Similar stories about the origin of death are known from other peoples within the Interlacustrine area (Abrahamsson, 1951 : 62; 64). The Basingo-clan is considered to be the lowest clan in the social hierarchy and the story was obviously used as a justification for the killing of

a man of this clan as a sacrifical victim to the new house of the chief, and it thus served, to use Malinowski's term, as a 'charter' for this practice.

One 'story' which I was told and which only seemed to be known to medicine-men (*bafumu*; sing. *mufumu*) has all the characteristics of a myth and was also considered to be 'a true story' (*omugani gw'amazima*) as the events referred to were believed to have happened. Nyamuhanga is here said to have lived on earth together with men a very long time ago. He had come down from the sky in order to teach mankind how to go about exploiting their environment in general, how to make fire by friction in order that they might cook their food — up to that time they had to eat it uncooked — how to build houses, and how to cultivate the land. He also told people how to live together. Culture and society are thus understood to have been given by Nyamuhanga who thus not only created man as an organism but made him into a cultured and social being.

The point on which especial emphasis was placed, however, was the role of Nyamuhanga in connection with the various kinds of magical substances, or 'medicines' (*mibazi*), an emphasis which is only to be expected in a myth which is especially concerned with medicine-men. Medicines are primarily made from trees and plants and Nyamuhanga showed the medicines, i.e. he identified the plants from which they were to be made and showed the procedures to the first medicine-man who was called Bwamba ('Blood'). Bwamba then taught other men the use of the medicines which Nyamuhanga hade revealed to him. It should be noted that all kinds of medicines were thus revealed, not only the good ones, but also the 'bad' ones used by witches for killing people.

4. The modality of the High God which is referred to by the term 'Rugaba' is perhaps the most difficult to define. As the name shows he is 'the giver'. *Kugaba* is a verb in general use meaning to give, and *rugaba* is a common noun used when an inferior addresses a superior from whom he has received some gift or favour. There is a proverb which clearly expresses the conception of Rugaba as 'the giver': 'Rugaba is the one who gives everything' (*Rugaba niwe agaba byona*). The interesting thing in this connection is naturally what it is that Rugaba gives. Informants stated that Rugaba may give anything he is asked to give, but also that it is far from certain that he will give as he may well refuse to grant what is asked of him. What he may give is health,

children, and riches, which are the standard values asked of any supernatural being. He may, however, not only refuse to give these things but may, on the contrary, give 'bad things', all kinds of misfortunes and diseases. In this connection, leprosy and syphilis were especially singled out as diseases 'brought' by Rugaba.

Rugaba, then, is the one who decides whether a man is to be rich or poor, whether he is to have many children or none at all, whether he is to be healthy or ill, or live long or die young. He is, in other words, the power which determines a man's destiny.

5. Kazoba is the modality of the High God which is of primary significance in connection with ritual activities, and he is, moreover, the only modality that manifests itself in a natural phenomenon. 'Kazoba' is derived from *izoba*, the common word for 'sun', the two words differing only in the prefixes attached to the root *-zoba*. The nominal prefix 'ka-' is often used to form diminutives from nouns belonging to other noun classes (e.g. *mwana*, 'child', *kana*, 'small child'), but it is also used in the formation of proper nouns which take the concord prefixes of the 'personal class' without any implications of the diminutive. The name thus indicates that Kazoba is the sun thought of as some kind of person. [5]) The Zinza High God is thus clearly a 'sun-god'. As we saw in a preceding section there are some indications that God as Nyamuhanga is associated with the sky as people talk about him as if he were living in the sky. But he is never thought to be the sky and can hardly be called a 'sky-god'. When asked were Nyamuhanga is, the Zinza will answer that 'he is everywhere' (*ali hona*). In answers to direct questions of this kind they never associated him specifically with the sky, an association which is undoubtedly expressed in their myths and stories. Nymuhanga has thus, at least today, only a rather vague connection with the sky, and neither he nor Rugaba is believed to manifest himself in any natural phenomenon. It should be borne in mind that although Kazoba is not a separate deity, but only one of the modalities or 'persons' of God and that the 'total' High God may be

---

5) Though there can be no doubt that Kazoba is God, various people maintained that Kazoba was a chief who had lived a very long time ago, or that he was a *muchwezi*-spirit (as he generally is in the Interlacustrine area), or that he was an ordinary man who lived some time ago and left a ghost which some people actually had a regular cultic relationship to. To discriminate between God and this man, people called the latter *Kazoba k'ahansi*, 'Kazoba of the earth'.

spoken of as a 'sun-god', it is actually Kazoba only who is thought of as the sun. Nyamuhanga and Rugaba are never thought of in connection with the sun, to describe their natures people say that Nyamuhanga (or Rugaba) is 'like wind' (*nk'omuyaga*). Being 'like wind' he is everywhere and in no place in particular, and he has no shape.

Though Nyamuhanga or Rugaba thus have no shape being like the wind, this does not apply to Kazoba who 'is' the sun. Some people said that Kazoba was a man shining all over like the sun. As already indicated by the two terms *izoba* and Kazoba, people do not necessarily think of the sun, as God except in certain situations. The sun is commonly thought of much as we do, as a thing which gives light and heat. A certain kind of fever may thus be said to be 'brought' by the heat of the sun. Kazoba is said to light the world through the sun, or to show himself in the sun, and he may thus be said to be the sun in the sense in which it can be said that a god or spirit 'is' the shape which can be perceived by the senses. One man compared the relationship between Kazoba and the sun with that between a 'horn' (*kihembe*) and a snake. A 'horn' is a kind of being with some human characteristics made from various kinds of magical substances and supposed to be used by witches who send it to kill their intended victims. 'Horns' are usually invisible but on their way to the house of the victim, or inside this house, they may occasionally be seen in the shape of snakes. The horn has taken the shape of a snake and the point is that the horn is the snake which has no separate existence, it is the shape in which the horn may be seen. If we take this comparison to be exact, the existence of the sun is thus dependent on Kazoba, the sun being the shape in wich Kazoba 'shows himself'. Considered from another point of view, the comparison is not accurate. A 'horn' may be, and usually is, thought of as independent of a snake, Kazoba cannot in the same way be thought of as independent of the sun. Thus people maintained that the sun must have been pre-existent as they could not imagine a time when Kazoba existed and not the sun. Some people, however, maintained that the sun was created by Nyamuhanga together with the rest of the world.

6. In the fundamental idea of a loss of 'vital power' (*amani*) and resulting religious impurity through an unwanted intervention of some mystical agency, one may disern an implicit notion of three levels in the conceptualization of the causes of misfortunes. On the most simple

level one only reckons with what may be called 'empirical' causes which play about the same role in everyday life as they do in ours. The result of empirical causes alone are minor accidents, like falling and bruising oneself slightly, or minor ailments like constipation or a common cold. Unless one has 'dirt' (*miyanda*) already one will not normally ascribe a meaning to such slight misfortunes, and there is no loss of 'vital power' and resultant 'dirt'. If a disease occurs the patient is treated with medicines known to most people or alternatively in hospital with 'European' medicines and other remedies. If, however, the disease should not yield to treatment, one will begin to suspect that the disease had ben 'brought' (*kuleta*) by some supernatural agent or through magic. This can only be disclosed through the use of an oracle and one will therefore consult a diviner (*mufumu*) who, through the use of one or another of a number of oracular techniques and through an interview with his client finds an agent which as a rule is also acceptable to the client as he will normally have his suspicions as to the identity of the agent. The important thing is that when a man has decided to consult a diviner to find out what is 'killing' him, the diviner will always point out some supernatural agent or a person using magic and he will also suggest what might profitably be done in such a situation.

If the misfortune is a disease, interest is now lost in the would-be rational identification and treatment. It will be identified with the spirit, or spirits, or magical substance, the actual presence of which is the cause of the disease which will disappear when the agents or magical substances are made to go away or removed, by ritual means.

But it sometimes happens that diseases or the consequences of accidents which are due to mystical agents and therefore imply a reduction of ontological status cannot be cured through the usual ritual means and the victim of the disease or accident and often his family as well, will face a situation in which the state of impurity threatens to be permanent. In this situation God will be called forth in peoples' minds as he is the final answer to all questions of meaning. God is not an agent of particular misfortunes on the same level as the ancestors, clan-spirits, *bachwezi* and magical substances, consequently he cannot be disclosed as an agent through divination. But on the level where God becomes relevant there is, of course, no need for divination, as he is the only one who can be responsible. When the usual ritual means held to be effective in puryfying the impure have not led to the hoped for

results and although they have been properly performed and it has been made sure that no other agent on the same level has brought the misfortune, there is only one possibility left, viz. that God does not wish the ritual to be effective. In some way and for some reason usually unknown to man God has prevented the ritual actions from being instruments of salvation.

Though God may be called forth in peoples' minds on other occasions as well, it is, typically enough in situations where a man and his family face a situation of permanent impurity that a *cult* to him is established.

7. In a given instance, the cult of the High God is generally found to have a ritual history behind it. On this level the intermediate agents have lost interest and in this situation one is concerned with the High God directly. The cult of Kazoba is thus established by a particular domestic group in times of crisis and thus has an irregular character, though when a man has promised to sacrifice to Kazoba it may take years before the cultic relationship in which he has engaged himself finally comes to an end.

The shrine of Kazoba is of a very simple kind, being a *mumande*-tree (a species of wild ficus) at the foot of which grass is spread out as is done at any place of sacrifice. A tree of this kind can be seen at most older homesteads but new ones are not often planted nowadays. The '*mumande* of Kazoba' is always planted on the eastern side of the courtyard. When worshipping people therefore stand in the courtyard facing the tree and the sun. Why a *mumande*-tree should serve as the shrine of Kazoba, nobody knows; they only know that God is present at the tree which thus serves as a means of communication between God and the world of men. We know, however, from the related Nyoro, that the *mumande* was one of the props on which the sky rested in the beginning when sky and earth were close together, and thus it served in a concrete sense as a means of communication between the two parts of the world (Fisher, 1911:70). In addition to the three and the grass spread out beneath it some people used to place an iron gong, 'the plate of Kazoba' (*ntemere ya Kazoba*) beside the tree. This gong was struck with an iron rod at the beginning of a ritual directed towards him in order to draw his attention to what was about to take place. This does not, however, seem to have been a universal practice and some people maintained that they had never used such a gong and that it was a custom of the Sumbwa, a people belonging to the Nyam-

wezi cluster, and who were the dominent ethnic element in a small chiefdom in the southeastern part of Biharamulo District.

Nowadays the domestic group is the only kind of congregation in the cult of Kazoba, but in the old days when larger groups of agnates are said to have lived together, the congregation could also be a lineage group led by the 'clan-head' (*omukuru w'oruganda*) and the sacrifice in that case took place in the homestead of this man.

While one may go to the '*mumande* of Kazoba' to pray at any time, sacrifices are always performed in the morning at about 9 a.m. when the sun is well above the horizon. When praying, one remains standing, holding one's hands in front of one's face with the palms together.

Blood sacrifices to Kazoba are very rare. An old man of about 70 had sacrificed only twice in his lifetime. Usually a sacrifice is only performed after a promise of sacrifice has been made by the head of the domestic group when this is in a state of impurity and the usual ritual means have proved ineffectual. Although the usual thing to do is not to make a promise of sacrifice till the intermediate agents have been approached with due rituals, one may also pray to Kazoba in these situations and even sacrifice to him if one owns a suitable animal. A man whose family had been made 'dirty' by the presence of his clan-spirit and the bachwezi, on the same occasion sacrificed a goat to the clan-spirit, a wether to the bachwezi, and a wether to Kazoba. Most people will in a situation like this omit a sacrifice to Kazoba because the intermediate agents, the spirits, must be sacrificed to anyhow, and if these sacrifices should turn out to be successful, the sacrifice to Kazoba would be unnecessary. In order not to run into unnecessary expenses people tend to take great chances even if they know that their lives are at stake. Most people then, will only combine the sacrifice (or some other ritual) to the spirit, or spirits, in question with a prayer to Kazoba that he may let the sacrifice or other ritual to the actual agent become efficacious and often that he may not place any 'obstacles' (*bitango*) in the way. The prayers are quite simple and run as follows:

> Kazoba of the sky, look after me that I may sacrifice (to the actual agent) in order that my son may come back to life!
>
> Make my man well for me, Rugaba, make my man well for me, The long-living (*Nyakutura*)!

The words may vary as there are no set formulas, but it is deemed

necessary that the supplicant should have the right intention, he must feel really concerned about the matter and express this concern.

But apart from situations where a loss of vital power and resulting impurity is an established fact, one will also pray to the High God in emergencies when one feels that one is already in the grips of death like e.g. when being overtaken by a violent storm on the lake but in these cases the prayers may be primarily directed to the clan-spirit or the ancestors.

If now, after prayers of this type, the sick person does not recover but dies, one has not committed oneself to establishing a cult to Kazoba. Simple prayers like those quoted above do not imply a promise of sacrifice. People will usually pray first, and if they do not seem to be heard, they may take the next step and promise Kazoba that a sheep will be dedicated to him. Formerly, a cow was the usual animal dedicated to Kazoba but nowadays a sheep is more likely to be used. The sheep must be white because the sun is white, and is called simply the sheep of the property of Kazoba and cannot be sold of otherwise disposed of Kazoba (*entama ya Kazoba*). The family head takes the sheep to the shrine of Kazoba where he formally dedicates it. His family must be present and often other relatives and neighbours will be present as well. If he has recovered in the meantime, he will thank Kazoba and inform him that he has brought him the sheep which he had promised and that he will sacrifice the first male offspring of the sheep to him when it has grown up. Only grown-up wethers born of a sheep dedicated to Kazoba can be sacrificed to him. The sheep is considered to be the property of Kazoba and cannot be sold or otherwise disposed of and ideally all its offspring also belong to Kazoba and should eventually be sacrificed to him if necessary, but many people actually only sacrifice the first wether to Kazoba, and are less scrupulous about the rest of the offspring. If the dedicated sheep should die, Kazoba is informed of the fact, and provided that the family has been saved from a condition of impurity and disease, it will probably not be replaced, though a replacement may be promised.

When the wether is eventually sacrificed, the ritual follows the same pattern as the sacrifices to the various kinds of spirits, but as these sacrifices are rarely performed I did not see one myself. The wether is led to the *mumande*-tree where the family and often also relatives

and neighbours, will be present, and there the family head presents it to Kazoba,

> Be welcome, the goat which I gave you is this one,
> Be satisfied and look after my whole family.

The animal is then killed and skinned and small pieces of meat are cut from its various parts and roasted on a small fire near the tree. Some pieces are placed on fresh leaves at the foot of the tree and Kazoba is asked to eat these, while the members of the family concerned and other people present eat the other bits. Often beer is added so that the family not only eats with Kazoba but also drinks with him. Through this rite of commensality 'peace' (*mirembe*) is reestablished between Kazoba and the family.

Though a prominent feature of these sacrifices is that of showing Kazoba one's gratitude, it is of importance to note that the sacrifice must be performed even though the sick person died in the meantime. If, for instance, the family head is sick and dies after a promise of sacrifice to Kazoba has been made, his heir must carry out the obligation incurred by his father. In the promise of dedication of sheep and subsequent sacrifice of a wether to Kazoba there is no proviso that Kazoba must let the sick become well again. One is fully aware that the promise of sacrifice does not commit Kazoba to a positive return, Kazoba is not expected to act always as man wants him to act and the sacrifice is not thought of as a contract where Kazoba has his part to fulfil. In Zinza blood sacrifices, the life of an animal is substituted for the life of man, and all blood sacrifices are 'sacrifices of desacralization', but in the sacrifices to Kazoba one has no guarantee that the substitution is accepted, and Kazoba may take both lives. This is in accordance with the role Kazoba plays as the ultimate explanation of everything that happens.

Though today Kazoba is of greater importance in situations which imply a loss of vital power, prayers and simple offerings of beer or milk are also directed to him in various situations where no loss of vital power has occurred. After the harvesting of millet in July/August there is a general presentation of beer made from the new millet to the ancestors and the clan-spirit. In this ritual Kazoba is often included. The family head dips a straw in a calabash which contains some of the new beer and sprinkles a few drops of it on the shrine and prays that 'peace' may be preserved in his family.

It is also said formerly to be a common custom — especially among the Zinza of the Geita District to the east — each morning at sunrise to clap one's hands in front of one's face as an expression of gratitude. While facing the sun people said,

> Thank you, *chombeka* (a honorific epithet), thank you Rugaba, you have appeared!

This act is said often to have been accompanied by filling one's mouth with beer and spitting it out in the direction of the rising sun.

Kazoba has a special significance for medicine-men, this was naturally so in the past but has probably become more accentuated today as the medicine-men with the vested interests they have in the traditional religion are the natural upholders of the old beliefs and practices. Kazoba is thus especially associated with the collection and use of the 'big medicines' i.e. those used for treating people attacked by witchcraft, in exoristic rituals, and in legitimate vengeance magic (*kutega*). The knowledge of these 'big medicines' is the special field of the medicine-men. Before he makes for the forest in the morning to find trees and other plants from the roots, bark, or leaves of which medicines are usually made, the medicine-men will stop at the *mumande* of Kazoba and ask God in words like these,

> Kazoba, look after me and direct me so that I may go and 'see' (i.e. find the medicines).
>
> Kazoba, Rugaba, look after me so that I may find this medicine.

When later on the medicine is used, it is said to be usual to ask for the assistance of Kazoba, that he will make the medicine work properly, i.e. in accordance with its nature as this was laid down by the High God at the time of creation. This prayer is usually a silent one. The assistance of Kazoba is often thought of in a rather negative way, and he is asked not to prevent the power of the medicines from having the desired effect. As to vengeance-magic, informants thus stated that Kazoba is prayed to that he may 'allow' (*kuzubura*) the performance, that he should put no obstacles in the way, but 'give a path' to the medicines that they may have the desired effect.

In Zinza religion there is another category of men who use medicines. These are the witches (*barogi*; sing. *murogi*), by nature evil and perverted men whose greatest pleasure is to kill. The witches use other medicines than the medicine-men, theirs are 'bad medicines' that can

only be used for killing. But as the imaginary medicines of the supposed witches are admittedly 'big medicines' they are believed to be collected and used under the protection and with the aid of the High God and the witches are believed to pray to Kazoba for assistance in their evil deeds.

8. There has been some disagreement as to the ethical character of the High God in 'primitive' religions. Some writers like Wilhelm Schmidt and R. Pettazzoni have underlined the ethical character of the High God, while others, like Geo Widengren, have stressed that the typical primitive High God transcends good and evil, that he is morally indifferent. This 'ambiguity' which often seems to be contained in the conception of the High God may, I believe, in many cases be better understood if we distinguish between the activities of the High God in the beginning, and his continuing influence in the lives of men. In his capacity of creator of the universe and of men, a creation which implies social order and thus morality, he may be said to be an ethical being. But although he created the cosmos it does not follow that he acts as a guardian of this order in the sense that he punishes those who infringe the divine norms and rewards those who act in accordance with them.

In Zinza religion Nyamuhanga created the world, not only the 'natural' world, man in a state of nature and animals and plants which he could feed on. He also made the chief rule other men as his representative. With this creation in mind people will say that Nyamuhanga is 'good' because existence is positively evaluated in the form which owes its origin to the High God. The knowledge that society is of divine origin may in itself motivate people to act in accordance with this order and those who infringe the norms may be told by their fellow men that it is bad to do so, the idea of a divine origin of society being used as an argument. In this sense there is always a connection between morality and the High God when society is believed to have a divine origin. The point I wish to make is that the actual sanctioning of this order is in the hands of men as the Zinza High God does not act as an actual guardian of the social order which he himself instituted. He is not believed to punish transgressors. In this respect he is the amoral God who transcends the distinctions made between good and bad. There are, however, two instances where God is believed to 'punish' (*kuhasa*) men. Once concerns his cult. He is thus thought to punish people who do not fulfil the ritual obligations they have committed themselves to,

but only those which are of direct concern to the High God. A man who fails to sacrifice to him after he has promised to do so, or sells the sheep of Kazoba, may thus be punished. Faults of this kind are what we would call sins. But there is one more sin of a rather different type, that of 'pride' (*ikuru*),

> It is pride when a man boasts to himself or others that he has many children or is rich, or of other things. It is Nyamuhanga who has given him everything and if he shows pride in the things which really belong to Nyamuhanga, he may take them back.

This idea is also expressed in a proverb, 'He who has riches will possess them with Mungu' (*Atunga eitunga alitunga na Mungu*). This kind of pride, which implies a feeling of transcending one's own position as an ordinary human being and ascribing to oneself some of that 'power' and being which properly belongs to God alone, is thought to be felt by God as a crime towards his very being, as a lese-majesty.

Those two cases strictly concern the relationship between man and God, and the High God will never interfere and punish a wrong committed towards another man, he does not punish misconduct or reward good conduct. Thus the right kind of behaviour is not considered a necessary qualification in the cult of Kazoba. A 'bad' man, murderer or thief, or even a witch, stands no less a chance of being saved from his misfortune or disease or being helped in other ways, than the good man. But no man, good or bad, can be certain that God will help him.

As we have seen it is God who creates every man and it is he who determines the quality and length of his life. 'Mungu measures every thing' (*Mungu apima byona*). In his 'measuring', God is not led by any moral considerations.

> Mungu protects good people and bad people. He has made good medicines and bad medicines, for saving people and for killing people. Mungu can do anything he likes, destroy the good ones or protect the bad ones.

Why God chooses to act as he does in a given instance nobody pretends to know. What is stressed is not his morality or amorality, but his sovereignty and power. God is far away from men, he is remote though more in the sense of social distance than in terms of space. People do not know him and there is little emotional warmth in their relationship to him. He is always seeing men, but he is uninterested in them, he does not care for them.

God has created everything and when he takes the lives of men, i.e. when he 'allows' (*kuzubura*) a man to be killed by one of the spirits or by witchcraft, he only takes what belongs to him by right. One cannot have a grudge (*enzigo*) against God, one cannot argue with him because he does not act in a just and moral way. Everything is his; and with what belongs to him he can do as he likes and men can do nothing but recognize his sovereignty, a recognition which implies that one must not commit the sin of being a 'man of pride' [6]).

9. The question of the conception of God as a trinity may now more profitably be discussed. As said above the general idea is that Nyamuhanga, Kazoba, and Rugaba are more than three names for the same deity, they are said to be one but at the same time Nyamuhanga is singled out as the greatest of them. That God in traditional religions is sometimes conceived of as a plurality in oneness is well known, usually either in the sense that his 'good' and his 'bad' aspects are hypostatized into two divine figures who in some situations are different and in other situations conceived of as a unity, or as a multitude of beings which though separate entities are also God. There is thus no doubt among some of the earlier Catholic missionaries in the Interlacustrine area that such a conception of God was indigenous and pre-Christian in this region. A missionary of the White Fathers, P. Césard, who worked in the Haya chiefdom of Ihangiro, a chiefdom bordering on the Zinza chiefdom of Rusubi, wrote in 1927,

> "Les noms donnés à L'Etre suprême reviennent toujours sur leur lèvres: *Ishe Wanga, Rugaba, Kazoba* et d'autres termes: le Créateur, le Donateur, la Lumière. *Ishe Wanga* ou *Ruhaga* ou *Nyamuhanga* a créé, sons fils *Rugaba* (le nom l'indique) distribue aux hommes la vie et la mort, la prospérité et l'adversité; c'est à lui qu'on s'adresse dans le malheur et la détresse. Kazoba, le soleil, est la personne providence." (Césard, 1927 : 445-6).

---

6) The notion of God as a sovereign is naturally associated with the institution of chieftainship. Though it is difficult today to describe with any precision 'the sacral kingship' of the Zinza, it may briefly be said that the chief's relations with his people were compared with the relations of God with the world. The chief was considered to be the sun on earth. As mentioned previously, people used to greet the sun in the morning and in the same manner the appearance of the chief was greeted when he came out of his house in the morning. The verb used in this connection, *kuhabuka*, 'to appear' was only used of the chief and the sun. God had placed the chief on earth to rule men, 'the chief is in the place of Kazoba'. Kazoba was called 'the chief who surpasses everything', or 'the great chief'.

This statement is also said to be valid for the Zinza of Rusubi, but no further relevant material is offered to confirm this statement.

Père Césard may not, however, have been quite independent of another missionary of the White Fathers, Julien Gorju, who in his book on the Interlacustrine Bantu maintains that the trinity idea may be general throughout this area. Among the *hima* of Ankole he contends that Rugaba and Kazoba are conceived of as the sons of Ruhanga (1920 : 177) and he characterizes the three entities in the same way as P. Césard in the statement quoted above. In Bunyoro the three entities are called Ruhanga, Nkya and Kankya, an assertion which is corroborated by the Anglican Missionary Mrs. A. B. Fisher (1911 : 64) who says,

"If one questions very closely the old witch-priests they will speak of a first cause — a Creator who was plurality in one person; before any offering was sacrificed the priest always threw dust in the air and exclaimed, 'Ruhanga — Nkya — Kankya', which meant 'God — His brother — One person indivisible."

But here, as in the case of Gorju no evidence is adduced to confirm the statement. In a creation myth of the Nyoro as edited by Mrs. Fisher, Nkya appears separately as the brother of Ruhanga, but Kankya does not appear at all (1911 : 69 ff). John Roscoe, who wrote on several of the Interlacustrine peoples, mentions the possible existence of a trinity belief, but thinks it probable that Enkya and Enkyaya Enkya (Kankya) are epithets of Ruhanga (1923a : 21; 339).

Though as we have seen the existence of the conception of God as a trinity is asserted by some writers to have existed in the area, little in the way of material is offered to confirm this contention; neither do I regard my own material from the Zinza as conclusive in this respect.

My doubts in connection with the supposed existence of trinity-idea among the Zinza are first and foremost concerned with Rugaba. Only Nyamuhanga and Kazoba are real proper names, Rugaba is equivocal. Rugaba is a common form of address used by an inferior to a superior from whom he has received some favour. This use of Rugaba as an epithet is found in connection with all kinds of supernatural beings. In prayers and addresses to any kind of spirit and also to fetishes, this term is often used. Thus the term Rugaba, when used to address the High God may not have been more than an epithet designating God as a 'giver'. As can be seen from the preceding section one can easily think

of Kazoba and Nyamuhanga as separate entities, while Rugaba on the other hand hardly only emerges as a divine figure. But, if we do not suppose the traditional and pre-Christian High God to be a trinity, we are still left with the problem of Nyamuhanga and Kazoba. Neither can be dispensed with to form a unitary conception of God, and the problem of a plurality in oneness still remains.

Among the western section of the Interlacustrine peoples Kazoba is generally considered to be, not God, but a *muchwezi*-spirit. In Bunyoro which must be considered the centre of diffusion of these spirits, Kazoba is one of the *bachwezi* which are "a pantheon of contemporarily effective spirits, each terminologically identified with one of the long dead if not mythical Cwezi, and each possessing its own individuality and special competence" (Beattie, 1961 : 12).

'The long dead if not mythical Cwezi' were in Bunyoro a small group of rulers and their close relatives, and Kazoba is one of the more insignificant of these, both as the former man and the present spirit, and as a *muchwezi* he is associated with the sun. Thus it does not seem likely for Kazoba to have been one of the members of a trinity. In Bunyoro and Ankole the sun is not associated with the High God but with a *muchwezi*-spirit. What we are left with in Bunyoro and Ankole is thus Ruhanga (Nyamuhanga, etc.). This god may best be described as a *deus otiosus* who is the creator and whose amorality is stressed, but he is no 'sky-god' as his associations with the sky are vague. Though he may occasionally be prayed to for help or in gratitude, he is probably never sacrified to (Roscoe, 1915:91; 131, 1923:24, 1923a:23). We can easily see how Nyamuhanga of the Zinza also fit this description. But among the Zinza Kazoba is definitely not thought of as one of the *bachwezi*, here Kazoba is God, and the same God as Nyamuhanga One may thus be led to believe that Kazoba was originally a *muchwezi* which, for some reason, coalesced with the otiose High God and thus made him into a more active God to whom blood sacrifices are made, as Kazoba as a *muchwezi* is sacrificed to in Bunyoro and elsewhere. I think, however, that the question may be more complicated. If we go to the area south and east of the Zinza we find that the High God is often a sun-god. The island of Bukerebe in Lake Victoria, inhabited by a people related to the Zinza, represents an interesting typological 'transitional' form. God is here called Namuhanga as he generally is in the western section of the Interlacustrine Bantu. But this is the only

place within this area where he is obviously thought to be a 'sun-god', "On le confond volontiers avec le soleil. Le soleil c'est Namuhanga et Namuhanga c'est le soleil." (Hurel, 1911 : 78). He further says that one never sacrifices to him.

Though the conception of the High God as a 'sun-god' is probably very old in Tanzania as it is found among the remnants of the hunting cultures and is widespread among all ethnic groups, suffice it to point out that the neighbouring Nyamwezi and Sukuma think of their God as a 'sun-god', who is called Lyuba, 'the sun'. For a discussion of the sun-god among the Sukuma and other East African peoples I can do no better than to refer to a study by Berta Millroth (Millroth, 1965).

10. If we consider the Zinza High God as a unitary figure it will readily be seen that he largely conforms to the model of the High God as formulated by Geo Widengren (1938 : 1f; 70 ff). He is closely related to a uranic phenomenon, in this case the sun, he transcends the distinction between good and bad and is thus a 'Schicksalsgott', and he is the creator. The characteristics of the High God as a 'destiny-god' is stressed by Widengren, who also points out that the High God may often split into a good and a bad god, which in some religions may in some situations be fused again (1938 : 76-7). In the case of the Zinza we probably also have to do with a fission and fusion, but not along these same lines.

I believe, however, that the nature of the Zinza High God may best be summed up in accordance with the model formulated by Pettazzoni, as the distinction he has drawn between the 'all-knowing God' on one hand and the creator on the other is especially apt in this case. His 'all-knowing God', who because he is closely associated with the sky or sun or some other uranic phenomenon, sees everything, and because he sees everything knows everything, is clearly the type of god to which Kazoba belongs. As the sun which traverses the sky every day Kazoba is the one who watches men and their actions. So far Pettazzoni's model also applies to Kazoba. But Kazoba is, as we have seen, hardly to be characterized as an ethical god, he does not use his knowledge in order to punish or reward men in accordance with the moral quality of their actions. He is a passive observer, and his interference in the lives of men is capricious and not to be foreseen as he distributes good and an according to his own inscrutable will. Neither does he use atmospherical phenomena like storm and lightning as means of interference. It is the bach-

wezi-spirits which manifest themselves in this way, though in a sense it may be said that God as the ultimate explanation of everything that happens in the world makes his presence and will known through these spirits as he allows them to act. But thunder, lightning, and rain are never thought to be manifestations of God, but of various *bachwezi* spirits.

A valuable part of his thesis is that creativity is not an invariable characteristic of the omniscient god. And Kazoba is not the creator.[7] In the Zinza conception of the High God this thesis is substantiated, as the attributes of omniscience and creativity are shared by the two figures, Kazoba and Nyamuhanga is the creator and with creativity goes omnipotence, and we have seen that it is Nyamuhanga who is regarded as the source of all 'power'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABRAHAMSSON, Hans, 1951. The Origin of Death. Studies in African Mythology. *Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia xxlll.* Uppsala.

BAUMANN, Hermann, 1936. *Schöpfung und Urzeit des Menschen im Mythus der Afrikanischen Völker.* Berlin.

BEATTIE, John, 1961. 'Group Aspects of the Nyoro Spirit Mediumship Cult'. *The Rhodes-Livingstone Journal, No. 30.* Manchester.

CÉSARD, 1927. 'Comment les *Bahaya* interprètent leurs *origines*'. *Anthropos,* Bd. 22, pp. 441-65. Wien.

FISHER, A. B., 1911. *Twilight Tales of the Black Baganda.* London.

GORJU, Julien, 1920. *Entre le Victoria l'Albert et l'Edouard.* Marseille.

HUREL, Eugene, 1911. 'Religion et Vie domestique des Bakerewe', *Anthropos, Bd. VI,* pp. 62-94, Wien.

MILLROTH, Berta, 1965. Lyuba. Traditional Religion of the Sukuma, *Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, xxll.* Uppsala.

PETTAZZONI, Raffaele, 1960. *Der allwissende Gott.* Frankfurt am Main und Hamburg.

REHSE, Hermann, 1910. *Kiziba. Land und Leute.* Stuttgart.

ROSCOE, John, 1915. *The Northern Bantu.* Cambridge.

——, ——, 1923. *The Banyankole.* Cambridge.

——, ——, 1923a. *The Bakitara or Banyoro.* Cambridge.

WIDENGREN, Geo, 1938. Hochgottlaube im alten Iran, *Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 1938 : 6,* Uppsala.

---

7) It is generally found in East African that sun-gods are not creator-gods. See Millroth, 1965 : 55.

FLUCH UND SAKRALRECHT

Religionsgeschichtliche Prolegomena zur Frühentwicklung des Kirchenrechts

VON

WOLFGANG WIEFEL

Halle/Saale

Segen und Fluch gehören zu den religiösen Urgegebenheiten der Menschheit. In niederen und in Hochreligionen begegnet uns in verschiedenen Modifizierungen die Vorstellung, daß durch wirkkräftiges Wort Heil oder Unheil gestiftet wird. Segen und Fluch stehen aber auch in einer besonderen Beziehung zum Recht. Hier wie dort wird durch einen Wahrspruch eine Wirklichkeit geschaffen, die sozial von höchster Bedeutung ist. Durch den Segen wird der Gesegnete in einen Status versetzt, der ihn von dem Nichtgesegneten unterscheidet, durch den Fluch wird der von ihm Betroffene dauernd oder zeitweise von seiner Umwelt ausgesondert. Solche Beziehungen streben einer verbindlichen Regelung und schließlich einer rechtlichen Kodifizierung zu. Handlungen oder Unterlassungen werden mit dem Fluch bedroht. Auch hier stehen die Folgen in Entsprechung zu den Strafen, die das Recht verhängt [1]). Solange die Lebensordnung religiös bestimmt ist, sanktionieren Segen und Fluch die Rechtsordnung, ja ersetzen sie bis zu einem gewissen Grade [2]). Mit fortschreitender Entsakralisierung treten Religion und Recht immer mehr auseinander. Es liegt jedoch keine geradlinige Entwicklung vor, wie es der Fall wäre, wenn wir es

1) Darauf hat W. Schilling in seiner Studie über Religion und Recht hingewiesen: „Aus dem religiösen Urerlebnis geht der verpflichtende Charakter bestimmter Handlungen und Unterlassungen hervor, die die ersten Anfänge einer gesetzlichen Ordnung des Lebens bilden. Die Sakralordnung wird zur verbindlichen Sitte und Rechtsordnung" (Religion und Recht 1957 S. 50).

2) „Es wird daher möglich sein, Verhältnisse, die wir gewohnt sind als rechtlich geschützt zu betrachten und deshalb als Rechtsverhältnisse ansehen, zu irgendeiner Zeit nicht unter dem Schutz des Staates, sondern allein unter dem der Götter gestellt zu denken", schrieb schon 1857 der Rechtshistoriker H. A. Danz (Der sakrale Schutz im römischen Rechtsverkehr S. 12).

nur mit Stammes- und Volksreligionen zu tun hätten. Wo eine neue religiöse Gemeinschaft auftritt und in ihr neues Recht sich herausbildet, tritt der sakrale Ursprung des Rechts, seine Verwurzelung in Segen und Fluch klar in Erscheinung. Demnach würde die Untersuchung der Anfänge des Rechts einer religiösen Gemeinschaft den Blick auf deren religionsgeschichtlichen Mutterboden freigeben. In diesem Zusammenhang soll hier von einem bestimmten Aspekt der Frühgeschichte des Christentums die Rede sein.

Die landläufige Vorstellung lautet: Der Fluch gehört einer Denkweise an, die in den Hochreligionen, vor allem im Christentum überwunden ist. Aus dem eigentlich religiösen Bereich ausgeschieden, gehöre er nur dem der individuellen Ethik an und erscheine dort unter den verbotenen Handlungen.

In der Tat spielt das Fluchverbot in der urchristlichen Gemeindeparänese eine wichtige Rolle. Nach der synoptischen Überlieferung war es Bestandteil der Lehre Jesu, der in der Feldrede bei Lukas sagt: „Segnet die euch Fluchenden" [3]). Den Widerhall dieses Herrenworts finden wir bei Paulus: „Segnet eure Verfolger, segnet und fluchet nicht". [4]) Die Übereinstimmung ist so groß, daß man erwogen hat, ob hier Paulus nicht unmittelbar von einem in der Urchristenheit weithin bekannten Herrenwort abhängig ist. [5]) Das Fluchverbot findet sich auch in anderen Zeugnissen des Urchristentums. [6]) Um es richtig einzuordnen, muß man seinen religionsgeschichtlichkeiten Kontext beachten. Es ist offenbar, daß die Urchristenheit die Wirklichkeit des Fluches ernst nimmt. Das Fluchverbot bedeutet ihr keineswegs, daß sie in ihm nur den Rückfall in eine überwundene Vorstellungswelt sieht, der keine Realität entspricht. Sie teilt vielmehr mit dem religiösen Denken der alten Welt die Voraussetzung, daß Heil und Unheil an bestimmte Wesensträger gebunden sind, zu denen auch das gesprochene Wort gehört, daß also durch Worte ebenso wie durch Handlungen Heil oder Unheil gestiftet werden kann. Das Fluchverbot bekommt von da einen bestimmten Stellenwert. Wenn sogar die, die selbst fluchen, gesegnet werden sollen, dann wird damit auch für den äußersten Grenzfall der Selbstverteidigung gegen das Schaden wirkende Fluch-

3) Luk. 6, 27; vgl. Matth. 5, 44 D Θ.
4) Röm. 12, 14.
5) Vgl. W. Schrage, Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paränese, 1963, S. 243.
6) Jac. 3, 9. Did. 1, 3.

wort des anderen eine Möglichkeit abgeschnitten, die für den antiken Menschen als selbstverständlich zur Verfügung stand: das eigene Wort zum wirkkräftigen Träger von Unheil werden zu lassen. Das ist nicht mehr eine Frage der individuellen Ethik, sondern schließt ein verändertes Verhältnis zur menschlichen Gemeinschaft in seiner rechtlichen Ordnungsgestalt ein. Um dies zu ermessen, muß man die Rolle des Fluches in der rechtlich-sozialen Ordnung der antiken Welt näher kennen lernen.

In welchem Maße das urchristliche Verbot des Fluches in das Leben des antiken Menschen eingriff, zeigt sich uns, wenn wir die Rolle näher zu bestimmen suchen, die der Fluch im Bereich des griechisch-hellenistischen Kulturraums, in den hinein sich das Christentum ausbreitete, spielte.

Die Beobachtung des Sprachgebrauchs weist bereits auf einen für unsere Betrachtung entscheidenden Tatbestand hin. Er macht deutlich, daß für den Griechen der Fluch in den Bereich des Verkehrs mit den Göttern gehört, ja als Aspekt dessen gelten kann, was wir beten nennen.

Dafür einige Belege: Das Verb ἀρᾶσθαι, das im neutestamentlich-christlichen Sprachgebrauch das Fluchen bezeichnet, hat als Grundbedeutung beten. Aufschlußreich ist, wie es von dieser Grundbedeutung zu dem uns geläufigen Wortsinn gekommen ist. Bei Homer heißt ἀρᾶσθαι in der Regel beten, anflehen. Er gebraucht es, wenn er von Achilleus redet, der seine Mutter Thetis anruft [7]), aber auch um das Tun des Peleus zu bezeichnen, der (vergeblich) den Göttern betend etwas gelobt [8]). Die Bedeutung fluchen hat das Verb bei ihm noch nicht. Die nächste Stufe ist bei Herodot erreicht. Bei ihm hat der Wortsinn an einigen Stellen eine charakteristische Verschiebung erfahren. Er schließt jetzt das Anwünschen, das Anflehen ein, wo die unmittelbare Wirkkraft dessen, was man von den Göttern erbittet, in den Vordergrund rückt. So, wenn in der Schilderung der religiösen Sitten der Perser betont wird, daß der Perser nichts für sich selbst von den Göttern opfernd erbitten darf, sondern nur für den König und das Volk [9]). Noch einen Schritt weiter gelangen wir mit der Drohung des Kambyses für den künftigen Herrscher, falls dieser nicht

7) Il. 1, 351: πολλά δὲ μητρὶ φίλῃ ἠρήσατο χεῖρας ὀρεγνύς. ed. P. Cauer, 1921.
8) Il. 23, 144: πατὴρ ἠρήσατο Πηλεύς.
9) Herod. 1, 32 ed. H. R. Dietsch, 1899.

versuche, die Herrschaft wiederzugewinnen [10]). Wenn er sagt, er wünsche (ἀρέομαι) allen Persern das ihm beschiedene Ende, so erwartet er von diesem Wunsch die unheilbringende Wirkung. Hier haben wir also das Verbindungsglied, das vom Gebetswunsch zum Fluch im engeren Sinne führt: mit ἀρᾶσθαι ist das Herbeirufen der Götter zur Ausführung eines unheilbringenden Wunsches gemeint, wobei der, der ihn ausspricht davon überzeugt ist, daß die Götter die Vollstreckung solchen Wunsches verbürgen.

Etwas anders liegen die Dinge beim zugehörigen Substantiv. ἀρά ist primär Flehen [11]), Gebet [12]), Wunsch [13]) aber auch Gelübde [14]). Jedoch ist hier die negative Bedeutung Fluch, Verwünschung schon früh belegbar. Bereits Homer, der beim Verb den entsprechenden Sinn noch nicht kennt, hat ihn [15]), von den Tragikern an begegnet er in großer Breite [16]). Demnach hätte sich zuerst bei dem den Inhalt des Spruches charakterisierenden Substantiv die uns hier interessierende Prägung herausgebildet, die dann später auf die Bezeichnung des Vorgangs zurückwirkte. Während der Vorgang noch als einer begriffen wurde, als ἀρᾶσθαι, setzte vom Inhalt des Spruches her die Differenzierung ein.

So kam es zu jener Doppelbedeutung, die Gebet und Fluch umfaßt, und die sich auch beim Verbaladjektiv ἀρατός findet, das einerseits erbeten, erwünscht, erfleht, andererseits verflucht, unselig, heillos bedeutet [17]). Sowohl diese Art des Bedeutungswandels als auch die Doppelsinnigkeit begegnen in den antiken Sprachen auch in anderen Fällen bei Begriffen aus dem religiösen Bereich. Das Wort ἀνάθημα, das ursprünglich eine den Göttern als Weihgeschenk dargebracht Gabe bezeichnet [18]), erhält die negative Bedeutung: das den Göttern zur Vernichtung Preisgegebene [19]).

---

10) Herod. 3, 65.
11) Il. 15, 378. Od. 4, 767.
12) Hesiod Opera 726, ed. Rzach, 1908. Pind. Isthm. 6, 63, ed. Snell, 1959.
13) Il. 15, 598. Herod. 6, 63.
14) Il. 23, 199.
15) Il. 9, 566. Od. 17, 496.
16) Aisch. Prom. 910 ed. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Sophokl. Öd. T. 295, ed. Mekler 1911, u.a.
17) Vgl. Liddell-Scott, Greek-English Lexicon I² 1940, S. 234.
18) z.B. die Weihgeschenke des Krösos in Delphi (Herod. 1, 92), die in den Tempeln Thebens und mit ihnen von Kreon verwüsteten Weihgaben für die Götter (Sophokl. Antig. 286). Die Bedeutung bleibt auch in hellenistischer Zeit neben anderen bestehen etwa Plut. Pelopid. 25, 1, ed. Ziegler, 1967.

Die Doppelsinnigkeit ist uns vor allem vom Lateinischen her vertraut, wo sie bei Begriffen wie sacer (heilig, verflucht), devotio (Weihung an die Götter, Preisgabe), bis zu einem gewissen Grade auch bei religio, religiosus in Erscheinung tritt. Hier leuchtet eine Grundgegebenheit der Religion auf, an der auch die ἀρά Anteil hat, die ursprüngliche Einheit der numinosen Erfahrung, der gegenüber die Scheidung des vom Werterleben her Positiven und Negativen erst sekundär ist. Bestätigt wird die Zugehörigkeit der ἀρά zum religiösen Bereich durch die Personifizierung und schließliche Deifizierung des Fluches. Was ursprünglich nur Werkzeug war (freilich mit numinoser Kraft erfülltes), wird zur Person, zur Gottheit. Die Personifikation begegnet uns bei Aischylos, wo die ἀραί als Töchter der Nacht und Bewohnerinnen des Hades vorgestellt werden [20]), während die ἀρά bei Sophokles zusammen mit Hades, Persephone und dem chthonischen Hermes genannt wird, also in der Reihe der Gottheiten erscheint [21]).

Verständlicherweise finden sich die Belege für die Personifizierung des Fluches vor allem bei den Tragikern [22]). Schließlich ist noch bedeutsam, daß für den Priester, also für den, der den Verkehr mit den Göttern vermittelt, in ältester Zeit noch die später ungebräuchliche Bezeichnung ἀρητήρ existiert [23]).

Aus alledem dürfen wir folgern, daß der Fluch eine Gegebenheit der Religion ist, seinen Ursprung im Umgang mit der Gottheit hat und zu jener Art das Gebets wird, das wirkkräftig Unheil herabruft. Welche Funktion dem Fluch im Leben des antiken Menschen zukam, tritt besonders eindrucksvoll an den im griechischen Raum begegnenden Fluchtafeln in Erscheinung. Auf ihnen ist der Fluch schriftlich festgehalten und damit gleichsam dauerhaft gemacht. Sie sind aus Blei gefertigt, das man der Haltbarkeit des Materials wegen gewählt hat, vielleicht auch, weil es das Metall des Kronos (Saturnios) war. Man pflegte sie in die Gräber zu legen, denn die Unterirdischen, die

---

19) Ältester Beleg: Fluchtafeln aus Megara: Def. Tab. ed. Audollent Paris 1904, 41B = IG III, 3 App. XIV, 17. Entscheidend dürfte gewesen sein, daß LXX חֵרֶם mit ἀνάθημα wiedergibt (an insgesamt 24 Stellen, denen nur 2 Stellen im klassischen Sinne gegenüberstehen: 2. Makk. 2, 13, Jdt. 16, 19).

20) Eumen. 417.

21) Electr. 111.

22) Aisch. Theb. 70. Sophokl. Öd. T. 418. Trach. 1202. Eur. Or. 987.

23) Nur an wenigen Stellen bei Homer, u. zwar in der gemeinhin als älter angesehenen Il. 1, 11. 94, 5, 78.

καταχθόνιοι galten als Vollstrecker des Fluches. Was ist auf den Fluchtafeln zu lesen? Auf manchen nur der Name dessen, den man verflucht [24]). Die meisten der erhaltenen Fluchtafeln weisen jedoch eine knappe Fluchformel auf. Die Terminologie, die dabei verwendet wird, ist nicht sehr variabel. Man hält sich an stereotype Formeln. Dies scheint dafür zu sprechen, daß der schriftlich festgehaltene Fluch der Fluchtafeln den mündlich ausgerichteten Verfluchungen entspricht. Die hieratische Sprache der Bannung liebt keine Abwechslung. So begegnen immer wieder die gleichen Verben: an erster Stelle das καταδῶ [25]) mit den Objekten γλῶτταν, χεῖραν, ψυχήν, daneben ὁρκίζω [26]) ἀνιέροι [27]) ἀνατίθημι [28]) καταγράφω [29]) κατέχω [30]). Sehr selten erscheint das Wort κατάρα [31]). Die Wendung παραδοῦναι τοῖς καταχθονίοις habe ich auf Fluchtafeln das griechischen Raumes nicht angetroffen, wohl aber — insgesamt 4mal — auf den sog. Sethianischen Verfluchungstafeln, die aus Rom stammen, aber in griechischer Sprache aufgezeichnet wurden [32]), sowie auf einem Zauberpapyrus [33]). Die dabei bemühten Gottheiten sind durchweg die unterirdischen, die χθόνιοι bzw. καταχθόνιοι : der (chthonische) Hermes, Ge, Persephone, Hekate, die Erynnien, daneben auch in Griechenland angesehene fremde Gottheiten wie Osirapis. Dagegen scheint der schon bei Homer [34]) vorkommende Zeus καταχθόνιος (dort zusammen mit Persephone genannt) keine große Bedeutung gehabt zu haben. Mit zunehmender Religionsmischung nehmen die fremden Götter einen immer breiteren Raum ein. Hierin unterscheiden sich die Fluchtafeln kaum von anderen Zeugnissen des Volksglaubens wie Amulett, Gemmen und Zauberpapyri. Neben die ägyptischen Götternamen treten solche aus

---

24) Inscriptiones Graecae (IG) III Suppl. (Tab. def. ed. R. Wünsch Berlin 1913) Nr. 1-39.

25) Mehr als die Hälfte der in IG III wiedergegebenen Tafeln, die über den Namen hinausgehenden Text bieten, also der Nrr. 40-141, weist dieses Wort auf.

26) Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum (CIG) VII Suppl., 1877, 12500, 12509-12511.

27) Sammlung griechischer Dialektinschriften (SDGI), 1884-1915, 3536-3539.

28) SGDI 3541. 3544. 3547. 3548.

29) IG III, 161.

30) IG III 88. 89. 102. 109.

31) CIG VII Suppl. 12511.

32) Def. Tab. ed. Audollent Nr. 155, 31. 156, 8. 161, 35. 163, 66.

33) Pap. Lond. 46 bei Preisendanz, Papyri Graecae Magicae II, 1931 Nr. 5, 334.

34) Il. 9, 457.

dem semitischen Bereich, wie Jao und El, auch Sabaoth [35]) und Adonai [36]). Die Nennung, gelegentlich auch die Häufung heiliger, für den Schreiber oft ganz fremdartiger Namen soll die Wirkung steigern. Daran zeigt sich, daß die Gottheit nicht so sehr als personhafte Macht verstanden wird, die man anruft, um sie zum Eingreifen gegen die im Fluch genannten Gegner zu veranlassen, sondern viel stärker als Garant der Wirksamkeit des ausgerichteten Fluches, von dessen Eigenwirkung man überzeugt ist.

Wer sind die Devotierten, deren Zunge, Seele oder Hand gebunden werden sollen? Nicht selten hat derjenige, der die Fluchtafeln anfertigte auch die Taten derer bezeichnet, denen der Fluch gelten soll. Es sind Leute, die geliehene Dinge nicht zurückgegeben haben [37]), solche, die die falsche Beschuldigung erhoben haben, der Devotierende habe Gift gegeben [38]), es ist die Frau, um deretwillen der Mann seinem Eheweibe abtrünnig wurde [39]). In dem erschütternden Fluchgebet von Rhenania sind es Mörder, die man nicht kennt: „Ich rufe und bete zu Gott dem Höchsten, dem Herrn des Geistes und allen Fleisches wider die, so in Arglist ermordeten und vergifteten die allzufrüh abgeschiedene Heraklea, vergießend ihr unschuldig Blut frevelhaft, daß es ebenso gehe denen, die sie ermordet oder vergiftet haben, ihr Engel Gottes, du dem jegliche Seele sich kasteit am heutigen Tage unter Flehen, daß du rächest ihr unschuldig Blut und es heimforderst auf das schnellste" [40]).

Fragen wir nach dem Sitz im Leben, so ist es in einer überwiegenden Zahl von Fällen die Situation des Rechtsstreits. Der Kontrahent, der zu unterliegen droht oder bei Gericht sein Recht nicht fand, wendet den Fluch als letztes Mittel an, um eine Wendung des Geschicks in seinem Sinne zu erreichen. Wo die irdischen Instanzen versagen, soll

---

35) Def. Tab. Nr. 208 = Wünsch, Antike Fluchtafeln, Kl. Texte 20^2 1912, Nr. 2.

36) Def. Tab. 241 = Wünsch a.a.O. Nr. 3.

37) SGDI 3537-3539.

38) SGDI 3536.

39) SGDI 3547.

40) Übersetzung nach Deißmann, Licht vom Osten^2 S. 305 ff. Die Situation ist aus dem Gebet deutlich zu erkennen. Zwei Mädchen, Heraklea und Marthine, der jüdischen Gemeinde von Rhenania sind umgebracht worden. Der Mörder blieb unerkannt. Am Versöhnungstag ruft die Gemeinde den Fluch auf sie herab und läßt die zwei gleichlautenden Gebete je auf einer Stele einmeißeln.

mit Hilfe des Fluchs, den die Gottheit sanktioniert, das Recht des Schwächeren durchgesetzt werden. Das ist die Grundsituation, der eigentliche Sitz im Leben für den Fluch.

Wie verhält es sich nun aber mit den Fluchtafeln, die in ganz andere Bereiche zu gehören scheinen? Eine auffallende Rolle spielt neben dem Rechtsstreit eine andere Situation, die mit ihm in gewisser Hinsicht verwandt ist: der sportliche Wettstreit. Auch hier gilt es, die Gefahr des Unterliegens abzuwenden, wenn nicht anders, dann mit dem Mittel des Fluches.

Der gleichfalls nicht selten begegnende Grabfluch [41]) soll die Ruhestätten der Toten schützen, da der Arm des irdischen Rechtes ausreichende Sicherung vor Grabschändern offenbar nicht gewähren konnte.

Eine Stiftungsurkunde bedroht mit dem Fluch alle jene, die das Stiftungsvermögen zweckentfremdet zu verwenden suchen [42]). Dieser Überblick macht auf einen wichtigen Aspekt der Beziehungen zwischen Fluch und Recht aufmerksam. Der Fluch hat seinen festen Platz innerhalb einen sakralen Rechts- und Lebensordnung. Er ist die ultima ratio, um das eigene Recht zu sichern. Er ist Mittel sakraler Selbsthilfe.

Die Vorstellung vom Fluch als sakraler Selbsthilfe ist auch dem Orient nicht fremd. Im Alten Testament gibt das Richterbuch einen Einblick in die palästinische Volkssitte, wenn es schildert, wie eine Frau, die ihr Geld vermißt und glaubt, daß es ihr gestohlen worden sei, deswegen einen Fluch ausspricht (Jud. 17, 2f.). Dieser Fluch wird bezeichnenderweise nicht im Wortlaut wiedergegeben. Als es sich herausstellt, daß ihr eigener Sohn es an sich genommen hat, spricht sie, um den Fluch aufzulösen, über ihn ein Segenswort. Die in Lev. 5, 1 enthaltene Rechtsvorschrift will diese Funktion des Fluches als Mittel der Selbsthilfe stärken, wenn sie jeden für schuldig erklärt, der einen Fluch hört und nicht zur Anzeige bringt, was ihm von der betreffenden Sache bekannt ist.

Was die Verbreitung von Fluchtafeln und Inschriften angeht, so gewinnt man aus dem vorliegenden Material den Eindruck, daß diese Gestalt der Verfluchung vor allem im Bereich der griechisch-hellenistischen Kultur vorkommt. In Rom begegnet sie uns erst vom 1. Jahr-

41) Dittenberger, Sylloge ^{3}III, 1908, Nr. 1238.
42) Dittenberger, Sylloge ^{3}II, 1907, Nr. 578.

hundert v. Chr. an, in Kleinasien trifft man sie häufig, selten jedoch im syrisch-palästinensischen Raum.

Dennoch sind wir berechtigt, bei der Bestimmung der sozialen Rolle des Fluches bei den Fluchtafeln und -inschriften unseren Ausgangspunkt zu nehmen. Wenn es sich bei ihnen um die schriftlich festgehaltene Form des Fluches handelt, dann unterscheiden sie sich nur durch diese Fixierung, nicht aber in Wesen und Funktion vom mündlichen Fluch. Die Schrift soll die Wirkung des Wortes verstärken, die Aufzeichnung sie dauerhaft machen. Wir dürfen folgern, daß der gesprochene Fluch, dessen Klang die Nachwelt nicht mehr erreicht hat, nach Wesen und sozialer Funktion dem entsprach, was wir beim geschriebenen Fluch kennengelernt haben.

Die Wirkung des Fluches lag nicht zuletzt darin, daß er — sei er geschrieben oder gesprochen — nicht auflösbar war.[43]). Mit ihm ist nach der Vorstellung des antiken Menschen eine neue Wirklichkeit in das Leben des Menschen eingetreten. Hier gilt das Wort Horaz: dira detestatio nulla expiatur victima[44]). Allein die Gottheit vermag der dem Fluche innewohnenden Automatik Einhalt zu gebieten, indem sie sich des Fluchbeladenen annimmt. Ohne ein göttliches Eingreifen wirkt das Verhängnis, das durch das unheilstiftende Wort ausgelöst wurde, unaufhaltsam weiter. Diese Überzeugung ist Gemeingut der gesamten antiken Welt.

Die Lösung des Fluches wird man sich nach der Analogie der Heliodorlegende zu denken heben, die wir in dem aus dem Bereich des jüdischen Hellenismus stammenden 2. Makkabäerbuch lesen. Heliodor, Kämmerer des Königs Seleukos, versucht den Tempelschatz in Jerusalem zu konfiszieren, wird aber, bevor er sein Vorhaben ausführen kann, durch eine überirdische Erscheinung niedergeworfen und ist dem Tode nahe. An ihm hat sich der durch die Gebete des Hohenpriesters, der Priesterschaft und des Volkes herabgerufene Fluch vollzogen. Um ihn zu lösen, bitten Freunde des Heliodor den Hohenpriester Onias, er möge für ihn bei Gott eintreten. Dieser bringt ein Opfer dar. Daraufhin wird Heliodor wiederum eine Erscheinung zuteil, die ihm kundgibt, Gott habe um des Hohenpriesters willen ihm das Leben geschenkt. Nachdem auch Heliodor geopfert hat, ist der Fluch gelöst und er kann

43) Vgl. dazu Thuwald im Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte 3, 1926, Sp. 397 f.
44) Epod. 5, 89 ed. F. Vollmer 1927.

zu einem König zurückkehren [45]). Die in der Legende berichteten Erscheinungen repräsentieren jeweils das göttliche Wirken: die Vollstreckung des Fluches wie seine Lösung geschehen jeweils durch Eingreifen der Gottheit.

Damit stehen wir bereits im jüdischen Bereich, in dem Segen und Fluch schon von Alten Testament her eine wichtige Rolle spielen [46]). Auffallend ist, daß die wesentlichen Beispiele für den schriftlich fixierten Fluch im Judentum aus der hellenistischen Diaspora stammen und von griechischen Vorbildern beeinflußt sind. Auch das in seiner Terminologie durchaus jüdische Fluchgebet von Rhenania ist dem Brauch der Umwelt gemäß auf einer Doppelstele angebracht. Die Zurückhaltung des palästinischen Judentums, dem das orthodoxe Judentum der späteren Zeit auch hierin folgt, erklärt sich am besten vom Glauben an die Wirkkraft des gesprochenen Wortes, wie sie für das Judentum vom Alten Testament her charakteristisch ist. Offenbar ist der Fluch so sehr an das gesprochene Wort gebunden, daß die schriftliche Gestalt als ein unangemessenes Surrogat gilt. Dem entspricht die große Scheu, die im Judentum den Fluch umgibt.

Dies verdeutlichen die folgende Beispiele, die zugleich zeigen, wie man auch hier den Fluch als eine unmittelbar in das Leben hineinwirkende Realität begreift. Die Rabbinen haben angeordnet, daß man bei der öffentlichen Lesung von alttestamentlichen Abschnitten, die Flüche oder Strafandrohungen über Israel enthalten, statt dessen die Namen seiner Feinde zu nennen, damit der Fluch diese treffe [47]). Auf der gleichen Linie liegt die Sitte, die in Lev. 26 vorkommenden Fluchsprüche bei der öffentlichen Lesung einfach zu überspringen. Sie ist den Autoritäten des Talmud bekannt, wird aber von ihnen nicht gebilligt [48]). Vom Glauben an die Wirkung des Fluches zeugen auch die Empfehlungen apotropäischer Mittel, die sich im Talmud finden.

---

45) Vgl. Hans Windisch, Die Christusepiphanie vor Damaskus und ihre religionsgeschichtlichen Parallelen ZNW 31 (1932) S. 1-23.

46) Zur alttestamentlichen Seite des Problems vgl. Mowinckel, Psalmstudien V, Segen und Fluch in Israels Psalmendichtung, 1923. Pedersen, Israel its life and culture, 1926 (The blessing S. 182-212). Hempel, Die israelitischen Anschauungen von Segen und Fluch, ZDMG NF 5 (1925) S. 20-110. Sh. H. Blank, The curse, blasphemy, the spell and the oath, HUCA 23 (1950/51) S. 73-95. Scharbert, Fluch und Segen im Alten Testament, Biblica 39 (1958) S. 1-26.

47) b. Joma 75b, b. Sukka 29a, b. Sanh. 67a.

48) b. Meg. 25b.

Man versucht durch eine Handlung, die die Erfüllung des Fluches symbolisiert, diesen selbst abzuwenden. Hat man etwa den Fluch über ein Schulhaupt gehört, so wirft man den Stuhl, der die Lehrkathedra vertritt, um [49]). Das in einem Fluch angesagte Untergehen eines Schiffes wendet man durch Einweichen der Kleider in Wasser ab [50]).

Zwiespältig ist das Verhältnis des Juden zur Nennung des Gottesnamens im Fluch. Naheliegend wäre die Vorstellung, daß die Nennung des Jahwenamens den Fluch besonders wirksam macht [51]). Sie scheint jedoch nur am Rande des Judentums, wo dieses in den griechisch-orientalischer Synkretismus übergeht, wirksam geworden zu sein. Von der dort vorkommenden Verwendung der Vulgärform des Gottesnamens Jao(oft in Verbindung mit heidnischen Götternamen) war bereits die Rede. Im rabbinischen Judentum wurde ein derartiger Gebrauch durch die Scheu vor der Aussprache des heiligen Namens, zumal bei einer Verfluchung, verhindert. So berichtet eine talmudische Geschichte von einem persischen Magier, der das Tetragramm ausspricht und dadurch seinen Sohn tötet [52]). Bezeichnend ist, daß man einen solchen Mißbrauch nur einem Heiden zuzuschreiben wagt.

Schließlich ist nach jüdischer Vorstellung die Wirksamkeit des Fluches abgestuft nach dem Rang dessen, der den Fluch ausspricht. So erfüllt sich bei einem Gelehrten der Fluch auch, wenn er unbegründet ist oder nur zum Schein ausgesprochen wurde [53]). Wenn solche Einschränkungen nicht gegeben sind, dann erfüllt sich auch der Fluch eines ungelehrten einfachen Menschen [54]).

Gerade die zuletzt behandelten Züge verdeutlichen, wie stark auch im Judentum die Vorstellung von der Eigenwirkung des Fluches verwurzelt war. Da, wo man sie bewußt in Dienst nimmt, wird der Fluch auch im Judentum zum Mittel sakraler Selbsthilfe. Wenn diese Verwendung in unseren Quellen zurücktritt, dann dürfte das durch die Spannung zwischen der Eigenart des israelitisch-jüdischen Gottesbildes und der traditionellen Überzeugung von der Mächtigkeit des Flu-

---

49) b. Gitt. 35a.
50) b. Baba batra 153a.
51) Vgl. Eißfeldt, Jahwenamen und Zauberwesen ZMRG 42, 1927, S. 161-186 = Kl. Schriften I, S. 150-171. L. Blau, Das altjüdische Zauberwesen, 1898, bes. Abschn. 4c, Das Tetragramm und die altjüdischen Zauberpapyri S. 128 ff.
52) jer. Joma 40d.
53) b. Ber. 56a, b. Sanh. 90b.
54) b. Baba kama 93a.

ches bedingt sein. Diese Möglichkeit sakraler Selbsthilfe aber ist es, die im Urchristentum durch das Verbot des Fluches radikal ausgeschaltet wird. Darin liegt die Entscheidung, die über den Bereich des Individualethischen hinaus in die rechtliche und soziale Sphäre eingreift. Indem der Mensch sich des Fluches entschlägt, verzichtet er darauf, sich selbst durchzusetzen und gibt sein Recht Gott anheim.

Mit dem Fluchverbot wird also keine allgemein anerkannte ethische Norm eingeschärft, sondern zum Rechtsverzicht, zur Preisgabe eine Mittels sakraler Selbsthilfe aufgerufen. Das neutestamentliche 'segnet und fluchtet nicht' steht unter den Leitprinzip des Rechtsverzichts, das die Bergpredigt bestimmt und in die urchristliche Ethik hineinwirkt. Damit ist freilich nicht das letzte Wort über die Stellung des Urchristentums zum Fluch gesprochen ebensowenig wie der individuelle Rechtsverzicht die Rolle des Rechts in der Urkirche abschließend bestimmt. Daß das Neue Testament nicht nur das Fluchverbot kennt, sondern selbst dem Fluch als einem durch wirkkräftiges Wort gestiftetem Raum gibt, wird deutlich im Blick auf folgende Zusammenhänge:

1. die sog. Strafwunder,
2. das Verfahren gegen den Blutschänder,
3. die Verwendung des Anathema in den paulinischen Gemeinden

Jeder dieser Komplexe vergegenwärtigt uns einen wichtigen Aspekt des Problems, das mit der Verwendung des Fluches im Urchristentum gegeben ist.

1. Von der einzigen synoptischen Erzählung, die man in diesem Zusammenhang zu nennen pflegt, der sog. Verfluchung des Feigenbaums [55]), kann hier abgesehen werden. Man hat vielfach in Zweifel gezogen, ob es sich bei ihr überhaupt von Hause aus um eine Wundererzählung handelt und nicht vielmehr um ein in Handlung umgesetztes Gleichnis nach Art von Luk. 13, 6-9 [56]). Andere Ausleger bestreiten zumindest den Charakter als Strafwunder bzw. als Verfluchung [57]). So verbleiben nur die Strafwunder der Apostelgeschichte: Ananias und Saphira [58]), der Zauberer Elymas, der Paulus auf der 1. Missionsreise

55) Mk. 11, 11-14. 20f. = Mt. 21, 18-20.

56) So Joh. Weiß, Die Schriften des NT Bd. 1[3], 1907, S. 178. Klostermann, Handb. z. NT[4], 1950, S. 116. Vom symbolischen Charakter sprechen auch konservative Ausleger wie Zahn, Lohmeyer und Schniewind.

57) Zuletzt H. W. Bartsch, Die Verfluchung des Feigenbaums ZNW 53, 1962, S. 151-160, vgl. auch Bruno Violet, Eucharisterion Gunkel II, 1923, S. 135-150.

58) Act. 5, 1-11.

entgegentritt [59]) und — bedingt in diesen Umkreis gehörig — die Verfluchung des Simon Magus, der jedoch kein Strafwunder folgt [60]).

Die nähere Betrachtung zeigt, daß diese Berichte eine ähnliche Struktur aufweisen. Es zeigen sich folgende Elemente:
der Fluch Act. 5,3.4 5,9,
die Wirkung des Fluches Act. 5,5a 5,10a 13,11 (Tod bzw. Erblindung),
die Demonstration des Erfolges Act. 5,6 5,10b. (Jünglinge tragen die Leichname fort, der Erblindete tappt herum),
der Eindruck auf die Anwesenden Act. 5,5b 5,11.13 13,12 (φόβος bzw. θαυμάζειν).

Das deutet auf einen besonderen Typus der Wundergeschichte, das Strafwunder oder Verfluchungswunder, dessen Vorhandensein allein bereits zeigt, daß der Fluch für das Leben der Urchristenheit nicht ohne Bedeutung war. Bemerkenswert ist jedoch, welcher Nachdruck auf dem Wort liegt, das das Geschehen auslöst. Der Fluch begegnet nicht isoliert, sondern ist in ein personales Gerichtsgeschehen eingebettet. Wiederum lassen sich dabei gewisse strukturelle Gemeinsamkeiten erkennen, die auch für das Fluchwort des Petrus in der Simon-Magus-Geschichte gelten. Es sind dies folgende Bestandteile:
die anklagende Anrede: Act. 5,3. 5,8. 13,10a 8,20a,
die Begründung: Act. 5, 4. 5, 9a. 13, 10b. 8, 20b,
die Ansage der Strafe bzw. die Aufforderung zur Buße Act. 5, 9. 13,11. 8, 22f.

Hier liegt die Vermutung nahe, daß solche Übereinstimmungen nicht in der schriftstellerischen Eigenart des Autors der Apostelgeschichte begründet sind, sondern sich von einer entsprechenden Praxis in der Gemeinde herleiten. Wenn diese Annahme richtig ist, verweist die aufgezeigte Struktur auf die zur Zeit des Lukas übliche Form des Bannes. Dabei ist wichtig, daß der Fluch in allen Fällen solche trifft, die sich an der Gemeinde versündigt haben. Er wird nicht zum Schutze Einzelner, etwa der Apostel angewendet. Die Gemeinde ist es, die von Ananias und Saphira betrogen wurde, sie wird untergraben, wo der Geist, der an den apostolischen ordo gebunden ist, durch χρήματα er-

---

59) Act. 13, 8-11.
60) Act. 8, 20 f.

worben werden soll, es geht um ihr Daseinsrecht, wenn die Mission behindert wird.

Wir dürfen als *erstes Ergebnis* festhalten, daß der Fluch hier nicht zur individuellen Selbsthilfe dient, sondern zum Schutze der Gemeinde.

Es soll freilich nicht verkannt werden, daß es sich bei den Strafwundern um einen Seitentrieb handelt, der in der apokryphen Literatur noch stärker hervortritt [61]).

2. Bezüglich des „Blutschänders" von dessen Treiben Paulus Kunde erhalten hat, und dessen Behandlung durch die Korinther ihm als zu milde erscheint, ordnet er ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι an: παραδοῦναι τῷ σατανᾷ.

Das παραδοῦναι τῷ σατανᾷ kann man als Entsprechung des παραδοῦναι καταχθονίοις ansehen, das trotz der schmalen Bezeugung [62]) als feste Wendung der griechischen Fluchterminologie gelten kann. Die Bestrafung geschieht durch Aussprechen einer wirkkräftigen Formel. Spuren solcher Bannungsformeln sind inschriftlich noch erhalten,

etwa CIG III 4235 ἁμαρτολὸς θεοῖς καταχθονίοις

oder CIG III 4253 ἱερόσυλος θεοῖς καὶ καταχθονίοις

Demzufolge darf man annehmen, daß auch Paulus die Übergabe an den Satan durch Aussprechen einer regelrechten Verfluchungsformel vollzogen denkt. Nach dem Vorschlag von Lietzmann [63]) hätte sie zu lauten: Wir übergeben dich dem Satan.

Worin besteht die Wirkung? Man hat an eine Exkommunikation gedacht, an den dauernden Ausschluß aus der christlichen Gemeinde. Doch hier liegt mehr vor. Das παραδοῦναι τῷ σατανᾷ ist Preisgabe an die Verderbensmächte. Daß der Satan als Verderbensmacht an die

---

61) Am bekanntesten sind die Strafwunder des Knaben Jesus im Kindheitsevangelium des Thomas (c. 3. 4. 5. 14). Dabei wird die Bedeutung des Fluchwortes ausdrücklich hervorgehoben. Die Anzahl der Strafwunder in den apokryphen Apostelakten ist geringer als man es angesichts ihres Umfangs erwarten würde. Die wichtigsten sind die Zerstörung des Artemistempels Joh. Act. 42, die Strafwunder an ehebrecherischen Kommunikantinnen Act. Petr. Verc. 2 (Hennecke-Schneemelcher II, S. 191f.) die regelrechte Verfluchung des Simon Magus durch Petrus in Act. Petr. Verc. 8 (Hennecke-Schneemelcher II, S. 199), die jedoch zunächst ohne Folgen blieb.

62) s.o. Anm. 32 u. 33.

63) HNT 9[4], 1949, S. 22.

Stelle tritt, die die Unterweltsgötter sonst einnehmen, ist gut jüdisch [6]). Zu vergleichen ist auch 1. Tim. 1, 20, wo der Autor Hymenäos und Alexander, offenbar zwei Gemeindeglieder, nennt, die er dem Satan übergeben hat. Dies bezeugt, daß es sich bei dem in 1. Kor. 5 gebotenen Handeln keineswegs um einen einmaligen Sonderfall handelt.

Die Preisgabe an den Satan geschieht zum Verderben des Fleisches. Das Verständnis dieser Wendung ist zur Beurteilung des Geschehens von großer Bedeutung. Von ὄλεθρος ist sonst im NT noch 3mal die Rede. In 1. Thess. 5, 3 und 2. Thess. 1, 9 geht es um den eschatologischen Aspekt, in 1. Tim. 6, 9 wird die Totalität, die Völligkeit des Verderbens betont. An dieser Stelle ist offenbar der physische Tod gemeint. Wenn das Fleisch dem Verderben preisgeben wird, damit das πνεῦμα gerettet werde, ist als Folge des Bannwortes, des vollzogenen Fluches an die Scheidung beider gedacht [65]).

Von der Geschichte von Ananias und Saphira, die man oft genannt hat zur Illustrierung dessen, wie Paulus sich die Wirkung des Bannspruches vorgestellt haben mag, unterscheidet sich das hier ins Auge gefaßte Handeln durch das Ziel. Dieses ist trotz des verderbenstiftenden Fluches die Rettung des πνεῦμα und zwar die endgültige, die eschatologische: ἵνα πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου. Damit tritt ein neuer für die Verwendung des Fluches bei Paulus (und wohl im Urchristentum überhaupt) charakteristische Aspekt in unseren Gesichtskreis: seine eschatologische Begrenzung.

Um die Bedeutung dieser Stelle für das hier behandelte Thema voll zu würdigen, muß noch ein Wort über die Tat gesagt werden, die Paulus in dieser Weise geahndet sehen will. Jemanden wird vorgeworfen γυναῖκα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν mit der Frau seines Vaters, also mit seiner Stiefmutter zusammenzuleben. [66]). Man hat das τοιαύτη πορνεία ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν so gedeutet, daß hier ein auch nach heidnischem Recht strafwürdiges Verhalten vorlag und auf Be-

64) Strack und Billerbeck, Komm. z. NT aus Talmud und Midrasch III, 1922, z. St.

65) Hier wird zweierlei erkennbar: 1. σάρξ und πνεῦμα erscheinen als anthropologische Kategorien. 2. Die Gewalt des Satans erstreckt sich nur über die σάρξ.

66) Da das γυναῖκα ἔχειν nicht das Konkubinat meint, sondern gemäß dem Sprachgebrauch der Koine sich auf die Ehe bezieht, muß es sich um die Ehe nach dem Tode des Vaters handeln (vgl. auch Dobschütz. Die urchristlichen Gemeinden 1902 S. 269).

stimmungen des römischen Rechts, etwa auf Caius, Institut. I, 62 f. (ed. Huschke, Jurisprudentia anteiustiniana 1879) verwiesen [67]). Dabei übersieht man, daß das römische Recht in den Provinzen keineswegs in allen Fällen unmittelbare Gültigkeit hatte [68]). Daß die Dinge in Griechenland, auf das es uns hier ankommt, anders lagen, wird durch zweierlei bewiesen:

1. durch die Rechtfertigung sogar des Inzests, die sich bei Vertretern der Popularphilosophie findet, wie aus Sext. Empir., adv. Mathem. V (XI), 191 (ed. J. Mau 1961) und Ps. Clem. Hom. V, 18, 5 (ed. Rehm 1953) zu ersehen ist.
2. durch das jüdische Proselytenrecht, das zwar die Blutsverwandten mütterlicherseits verbietet, aber bestimmt: alle übrigen, den Israeliten verbotenen Frauen sind ihnen erlaubt, und sei es das Weib des Vaters (b. Sanh. 17b Baraitha, jer. Jeb. 12a) [69]).

Die Ehe mit der Stiefmutter ist in Griechenland zwar moralisch umstritten, gilt aber nicht als strafwürdiges Vergehen. Freilich gibt es eine von strengeren Moralbegriffen bestimmte Ablehnung solcher Verbindungen. Das Traumbuch des Artemidoros etwa sieht darin einen Fall von Unzucht [70]).

Das für die Beurteilung der Praxis des Paulus Entscheidende liegt darin, daß er die höchste für ihn erdenkliche Strafe nicht für ein gewöhnliches Kriminalvergehen verhängt, das jedes weltliche Gericht gleichfalls ahnden würde, sondern für eine Tat, die zwar vom sittlichen Empfinden, nicht aber vom praktizierten Strafrecht verurteilt wurde. Der Fluch tritt also gerade da ein, wo der Arm des irdischen Gerichtes nicht hinlangt.

Als *zweites Ergebnis* können wir festhalten: Der Fluch als Mittel des Strafhandelns der urchristlichen Gemeinde richtet sich auf einen Bereich, der jenseits des weltlichen Strafhandlens liegt.

3. In diesen Zusammenhang ist auch die Verwendung des Anathema

---

67) Lietzmann HNT 94 S. 22 verweist noch auf Ulpian, Dig. 25, 7, 1.

68) Ramsay nach Bachmann KNT 7, 1910, S. 206.

69) Weniger wichtig sind die Fälle dieser Art, die ausdrücklich genannt werden: etwa Caracalla bei Ael. Spartian., vita Ant. Carac. 10, 4, Hermigiskolos, der Rüdiger seine zweite Frau gibt, Prokop, Bell. Goth. IV, 20, ed. Haury, 1962. Auch die wortgewaltige Entrüstung des Cicero kann nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß es mit der tatsächlichen Strafverfolgung nicht weit her war pro Cluent. 5-6 ed. C. F. W. Müller 1901).

70) Oneirocrit. IV, 20 ed. R. A. Pack 1963.

in den paulinischen Gemeinden einzuordnen [71]). Wenn wir von den beiden Stellen absehen, wo Paulus das Anathema für sich selbst ins Auge faßt — Gal. 1, 8 und Röm. 9, 3, die beide auf einen irrealen Fall abheben — haben wir uns auf zwei Zusammenhänge im 1. Korintherbrief zu konzentrieren.

Als Regel „zur Unterscheidung der Geister" erscheint in 1. Kor. 12, 3 der Satz οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς. Antithetisch geht es dann weiter: daß niemand κύριος Ἰησοῦς sagen kann, es sei denn ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. Daß das λαλεῖν ἐν πνεύματι nicht ein bloß inspiriertes Reden ist, sondern ein glossolalisch-ekstatisches, wird aus 1. Kor. 14 klar [72]). Wenn also die Frage auftaucht, ob jemand ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ sagen kann Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, so ist damit gemeint, wie das in der Ekstase gerufene Anathema zu verstehen ist. Damit ist deutlich geworden, daß das Anathema in die Gemeindeversammlung gehört, wo der Geist wirkt und nicht etwa als ein vor heidnischen Gerichten erzwungener Widerruf [73]). Obwohl die äußeren Phänomene gleich sind, kann es nicht das πνεῦμα sein, das hier wirkt. So gibt dieser Fall Paulus Gelegenheit, die bis dahin anerkannte unterschiedslose Gleichsetzung ekstatischer Phänomene mit dem πνεῦμα in Frage zu stellen. Wenn das parallele κύριος Ἰησοῦς Akklamationscharakter hat — wie im Blick auf Röm. 10, 9 und Phil. 2, 11 weithin zugestanden wird — so dürfte dasselbe auch Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς gelten [74]). Bei dem Anathema handelt es sich um eine pneumatische, d.h. in ekstatischer Hochstimmung gesprochene Akklamation. Rätselhaft bleibt jedoch, daß sie sich mit dem Jesusnamen verbinden konnte. Man hat an einen Kampfruf der Gnostiker gedacht, die den irdischen Jesus ablehnen und nur den pneumatischen Christus anerkennen, so Joh. Weiß [75]), neuerdings Schmithals [76]). Man braucht sich jedoch nicht auf solche unsicheren Vermutungen einzulassen, wenn man sich den besonderen Charakter der Gemeindeversammlungen (in Korinth) vor Augen hält, in denen solche Akklamationen laut wurden. Der schwedische Religionspsychologe Linderholm, auf den sich Lyder

71) Zur Herkunft und Bedeutungsgeschichte vgl. o. Anm. 18 u. 19.
72) Peterson, Heis Theos, 1926, S. 147, 1.
73) So Cullmann, Der Staat im Neuen Testament, 1956, S. 46.
74) Peterson, Heis Theos, 1926, S. 147, 1.
75) Meyers Kommentar z. NT[7] z. 1. Kor. 12, 3.
76) Die Gnosis in Korinth, 1956, S. 47.

Brun [77]) bezog, hielt es für durchaus verständlich, daß die ekstatische Stimmung bei psychopatisch affizierten Teilnehmern dahin führte, daß sie zu solchen Rufen wie 'Ανάθεμα 'Ιησοῦς hingerissen wurden. Die Nähe des Heiligen löst Gegenreaktionen aus, in denen das Unheilige sich gesteigert Ausdruck verschafft. Noch nicht beantwortet ist dabei die Frage, warum sich diese Gegenreaktion in einem Anathema-Ruf Ausdruck verschafft. Die Lösung liegt in der Einsicht, daß in der Gemeindeversammlung regelmäßig Anathematismen üblich waren [78]).

Man kann mit Recht einwenden, daß Fälle, die ein Strafhandeln notwendig machten wie der des „Blutschänders" nicht sehr häufig anstanden. Hier hilft der Blick auf den Schluß des Briefes weiter, wo uns wiederum das Anathema begegnet. Wir lesen dort einen Satz, der uns als Ende eines Briefes reichlich unpassend erscheinen will: εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον ἤτω ἀνάθεμα (16, 22).

Dem folgt das wegen seiner aramäischen Sprachgestalt als Akklamation anzusehende Maranatha. Günther Bornkamm hat aus der älteren These, daß die Paulusbriefe zur Verlesung in Gemeindeversammlungen bestimmt waren, die Konsequenz gezogen, daß auch die Anathemaformel dem christlichen Gottesdienst zugeordnet sei [79]). Dies wird bestätigt durch den Vergleich mit Did. 10, 6, wo gleichfalls das Anathema erscheint, indem statt des Anathema gesagt wird: „Wenn jemand heilig ist, der trete herzu (ἐρχέσθω), wer es nicht ist, der bekehre sich." Bei dieser Scheideformel haben wir es mit einer milderen Form des Anathema zu tun. Im Blick auf den kommenden Richter (Maranatha) wird die Scheidung vollzogen zwischen denen, die zum Kyrios gehören und denen, die von ihm getrennt sind. Auch die Didache hat die gottesdienstliche Versammlung im Auge. Die Scheidung konkretisiert sich hier in der Weise, daß diejenigen, von denen man sich durch diese Scheideformel getrennt hat, vom Herrenmahl ausgeschlossen bleiben. Das ἔρχεσθαι meint zweifellos das Hinzutreten zum eucharistischen Mahl. Die Scheideformel soll die Uneingeweihten (die noch nicht heilig, d.h. noch nicht Christen sind) und die Unwürdigen fern-

77) Segen und Fluch im Urchristentum, Oslo, 1932, S. 123.

78) Diese Linie setzt sich fort in den gleichfalls als Akklamationen ausgesprochenen Anathematismen der Konzile, auf die gleichfalls Peterson, a.a.O. hingewiesen hat.

79) Das Anathema in der urchristlichen Abendmahlsliturgie in: Das Ende des Gesetzes, 1952, S. 123-132.

halten. Ihr Sitz im Leben ist die Arkandisziplin. Wir können annehmen, daß da, wo in Ausnahmefällen, wie dem in 1. Kor. 5 ins Auge gefaßten, die feierliche Verfluchung stattfand, Scheideformel und Anathemarufe laut wurden, um dadurch alle unerwünschten, nicht zur engeren Kultgemeinschaft gehörigen Anwesenden auszuschließen. Da die in 1. Kor. 14 geschilderte Versammlung zunächst öffentlich ist (vgl. v. 23 ff), dürfte die Scheideformel mit dem Anathema an die Stelle gehören, wo die öffentliche Gemeindeversammlung in die geschlossene Mahlfeier übergeht. Wenn die Feier der Messe in der alten Kirche streng zwischen Katechumenenmesse und eigentlicher Opfermesse scheidet und vor Beginn der letzteren nicht nur die Katechumenen, sondern auch die Büßer, d.h. die Exkommunizierten bzw. in öffentlichen Sünden Lebenden aufgefordert werden, den Gottesdienst zu verlassen [80]), so dürfte hier ein unmittelbarer Zusammenhang mit dem bestehen, was bereits die Gemeindeversammlungen der apostolischen Zeit kennzeichnete.

So können wir als *drittes Ergebnis* formulieren: Das in Fluch- und Bannungsformeln Gestalt gewinnende scheidende Handeln ist ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der urchristlichen Gemeindeversammlung.

Das Vorhandensein einer zwischen öffentlichem Gottesdienst und Mahlfeier stehenden Scheideformel wird bestätigt durch den Blick auf analoge Erscheinungen in der religiösen Umwelt. In Lukians Alexander von Abonuteichos, wo der Verfasser das Treiben eines zeitgenössischen Mysterienkultes vor Augen hat, erscheint eine charakteristische Scheideformel. Alexander selbst stimmt an: ἔξω Χριστιανούς. Die Gemeinde antwortet: ἔξω Ἐπικουραίους [81]). Hier wird in akklamatorischer Form die Scheidung von denen vollzogen, deren Anwesenheit bei der Mysterienfeier nicht geduldet werden kann.

Dies ist nun keineswegs die Besonderheit eines obskuren Kultes, sondern geht zurück auf den Grundtypus des Mysterienkultes, der die Struktur aller später entstandenen bzw. in der griechisch-hellenistischen Welt heimisch gewordenen Geheimkulte entscheidend beeinflußt hat, auf den Kult von Eleusis. Bei den eleusinischen Mysterien erfolgt vor

---

80) Zuerst die sog. Klementinische Liturgie Const. Apost. VIII, 6-9, ed. Funk 1906.

Weiteres: Griech. Liturgien (Bibl. der Kirchenväter 5^2), 1912, S. 94 (Jakobuslit.), S. 169 (Markuslit.), S. 235 (Chrysostomoslit.).

81) Lukian, Alexander 38 (ed. Jacobitz (1911).

Beginn der eigentlichen Feier die πρόρρησις, durch die die Unreinen und die Leute mit sittlichen Makeln ferngehalten werden [82]). Auf diese Weise erhalten die kultischen aber auch die ethischen Vorbedingungen, die die Kultgemeinde stellt, ihre letzte Sanktionierung. Niemand würde es wagen, dennoch hinzuzutreten, da die Fluchwirkung solcher feierlich ausgesprochener Scheideformeln feststand. Hier liegt eine sakrale Rechtspflege vor, die sich dann gegenüber der staatlichen als unabhängig behauptet. Wir sehen das daran, daß selbst Nero es nicht wagt, sich in Eleusis einweihen zu lassen, weil er den sittlichen Bedingungen nicht genügen würde und fürchten muß ausgeschlossen zu werden [83]). Wo in der weltlichen Rechtspflege die Strafe steht, vertraut man hier der Wirkung des Fluches.

Von einer solchen sakralen Rechtspflege können wir auch bei der in Athen wirkenden Iobakchen-Gemeinschaft sprechen, die den Dionysoskult pflegt [84]). Religiöse Gemeinschaften, die Scheidung aussprechen und sie durch Fluch sanktionieren, übernehmen eine Funktion, die ursprünglich der Volksgemeinde oder dem Staat zukam. Die sakrale Rechtsordnung, die durch den Fluch geschützt wurde, bildete die Grundordnung menschlichen Gemeinschaftslebens überhaupt. Aus der ältesten, noch vorstaatlichen Zeit des Lebens in Griechenland dürfte es herrühren, wenn das Priestergeschlecht der Buzyges, die mit einem Fluch belegt, die ihren Mitmenschen die einfachsten Pflichten verweigern, den Verirrten den Weg nicht zeigen, Wasser und Feuer versagen [85]) oder selbst als schädlich erkannte Ratschläge geben [86]). So soll das Leben der Sippenordnung geschützt werden. Auch die Tempel und Heiligtümer, um deren Schutz es nicht immer zum Besten stand, werden auf diese Weise gesichert.

Einige dieser Flüche sind uns überliefert [87]). Vor allem verfährt der griechische Staat, d.h. die Polis so. Dort werden durch den von

---

82) Isokrates 4, 157 (ed. Benseler-Blaß 1913). Lukian, Demononax 34 (ed. Nillen 1906).

83) Sueton, Nero 34 (ed. Roth 1865): Während seiner Reise in Griechenland wagte er nicht, an den Eleusinischen Mysterien teilzuhaben, wo durch den Ruf des Herolds alle Unfrommen und Übeltäter von der Einweihung ferngehalten werden.

84) Dittenberger, Sylloge³ III Nr. 1109 (= IG II Nr. 1368).

85) Athenaios VI, 35 ed. G. Kaibel 1887.

86) Clem. Alex., Strom. II, 50, 17 ed. O. Stählin.

87) Lysias, adv. Andocid. 51 ed. Thalheim 1913: athenische Heiligtümer, Aischin., adv. Ctesiph. 110f. ed. Blaß 1896: Delphi.

seinen Beamten ausgesprochenen Fluch alle die getroffen, die den Staat und seine Ordnung bedrohen. Das klassische Beispiel sind die Flüche von Teos, die dirae Teiae, die leider nicht lückenlos deutbar sind. Hier werden genannt: Zauberei gegen die Gemeinde, Gefährdung der Getreideversorgung, Ungehorsam gegen die Magistrate, Hochverrat, Landsverrat und Landfriedensbruch [88]). Es handelt sich dabei durchweg um politische Vergehen, von denen sicher nicht alle durch Gerichte erfaßt und bestraft werden konnten [89]). Ähnliche Flüche sind aus Chios [90]) und Magnesia [91]) überliefert.

In ähnlicher Weise wird die Verfassung durch Fluch geschützt [92]).

Schließlich gehört es gleichfalls in diesen Zusammenhang, wenn Plato in den Nomoi den Fluch für eine Reihe besonders schwerwiegender Vergehen vorsieht: die Hinterziehung von Gold und Silber (742B), das Unterlassen der Anklage gegen die Mörder der eigenen Anverwandten (871B, die Duldung von Elternmißhandlung (881 D). Der Fluch erfaßt auch hier gerade die Bereiche, die sich der Strafjustiz entziehen. Das bedeutet aber auch: er war nur solange voll wirksam, wie die sakrale Würde der öffentlichen Ordnung ungefragte Voraussetzung des Lebens blieb, die theokratische Grundlage der Gesellschaft noch nachwirkte.

In der hellenistischen Zeit ging diese Funktion ganz auf die Kultgemeinschaften über. Was früher vor allem dem Staat zukam, bleibt jetzt ihnen vorbehalten: den Fluch auszusprechen und wirksam zu machen und durch die religiöse Sanktionierung Bereiche zu erfassen, die vom weltlichen Recht nicht oder nicht mehr erreicht werden. Das vollzieht sich in einer Periode, die durch den Niedergang der unmittelbaren politischen Autorität bestimmt ist. Damit übernehmen die religiösen Gemeinschaften zu einem Teil staatliche Funktionen. Die von ihnen geübte sakrale Rechtspflege ist für das soziale Leben und die

---

88) Dittenberger, Sylloge³ I Nr. 37-38 = SDGI Nr. 5623.

89) Weitere Beispiele: Fluch auf Weisung des Aristides über jeden, der mit den Persern in Unterhandlung eintritt (Plut., Arist. 10, ed. Ziegler 1957, Isokrates, Paneg. 156 ed. Blaß 1913), Verfluchung aller, die wider besseres Wissen, die Boulé, den Demos oder die Heliaea täuschen (Demosth., adv. Aristocr. 97 ed. Sykutris 1937).

90) Dittenberger, Sylloge³ II Nr. 987 = SGDI Nr. 5562.

91) Dittenberger, Sylloge³ II Nr. 685 = CIG II Nr. 1160, p. 2561.

92) Demosth. 20, 107, Plut. Solon 24.

ethische Prägung des Menschen in der hellenistischen Welt von großer Bedeutung.

Dem entspricht der Umstand, daß der Fluch aus Bereichen, wo er bislang zur Sicherung der Rechtsvorschriften diente, verschwindet und durch Androhung direkter Strafen ersetzt wird. Aufschlußreich sind hier die Grabinschriften, die, wie wir sahen, eine besondere Domäne des religiösen Fluches waren. Dieser wird nun ersetzt durch aus den Frevlern Strafe androhende Gesetz: ὁ τῆς ἀσεβείας νόμος [93]). Man überantwortet den Übeltäter nicht der Rache der Götter, sondern erlegt ihm eine Geldstrafe auf [94]).

Es konnte nicht ausbleiben, daß da, wo der Fluch seine Stellung im allgemeinen Recht weithin verloren hatte, nun auch moralische Kritik Raum gewinnt. Wenn Plutarch die Priesterin Theano sagen läßt: εὐχῶν οὐ καταρῶν ἱερείαν γεγονέναι [95]), so macht er sie zur Sprecherin der eigenen Gedanken [96]). Hier ist die neutestamentliche Ablehnung des Fluches überhaupt nachgebildet.

Andererseits hat das Urchristentum, insofern es sich als Kultgemeinschaft konstituiert und in Nachbarschaft zu den religiösen Gemeinschaften mit Mysteriencharakter steht, an dem oben beschriebenen Prozeß Anteil. In den Versammlungen wird eine sakrale Rechtspflege geübt, die in Scheideformel und Fluch ihren konkreten Ausdruck findet. Indem die Urkirche in den von der griechisch-hellenistischen Kultur bestimmten Zusammenhang hineinwächst, bildet sie selbst Polis-Struktur aus. Sie realisiert, das was in ihrem Selbstverständnis als Gottesvolk angelegt ist, in Gestalt eines sakralen, alle Glieder verpflichtenden Rechts. In ihr bildet sich eine Tendenz aus, sich zu einer geschlossenen auf dem sakralen Recht beruhenden Körperschaft zu entwickeln und das weltliche Recht nicht in Anspruch zu nehmen. Neben dem in 1. Kor. 6 ausgesprochenen paulinischen Verbot, heidnische Gerichte in Anspruch zu nehmen, ist das oben bereits erwähnte Beispiel des Gräberfluchs sehr eindrucksvoll. Noch in späterer Zeit verzichten christliche Grabinschriften im Unterschied zu heidnischen auf die Androhung weltlicher Strafen, dafür findet gelegentlich dort das ἀνάθεμα ἔστω [97]).

93) CIG III 4266.
94) Belege: CIG V, 592 X, 6706.
95) Alkib. 22, 5.
96) Vgl. z.B. Aetia Romana 44.

So bietet sich uns als *viertes* und letztes *Ergebnis* dar: Indem die Urchristenheit von Anfang an nicht nur als geistliche („eschatologische") Größe, sondern auch als soziales Gebilde, als Religionsgemeinschaft existiert, tritt sie mit ihrem sakralen Recht in einen Geschichtszusammenhang ein, der von der antiken theokratischen Ordnung zu den exklusiven Kultgemeinschaften der Kaiserzeit reicht.

Die zwiespältige Wertung des Fluches im Urchristentum auf der einen Seite Verbot des Fluches- auf der anderen Rezeption des Fluches im kultischen Gebrauch der Gemeinde-gründet im Doppelcharakter des Fluches, der einerseits sakrale Selbsthilfe, andererseits Bestandteil der sakralen Rechtspflege, religiöse Sanktionierung der Ordnung einer Gemeinschaft ist.

---

97) F. Cumont, Recherche sur le Symbolisme funeraire des Romains, S. 354 f., Paris 1942. Der gleiche Autor schon früher in den Melanges d'Ecole franc. de Rome XV, 1895.

THE TRANSPLANTATION OF RELIGIONS

BY

E. M. PYE

University of Lancaster

This article offers some ideas about the transplantation of religions which are thought to be sufficiently widely illuminating to be considered as a phenomenological theory.

What Van Der Leeuw called "the dynamic of religions" [1]) has always been the most neglected aspect of the phenomenology of religion. This neglect may have been at least partly due in recent times to the necessity of distinguishing clearly between the history of religions and the phenomenology of religion, which naturally led to the focussing of the latter on static structures rather than on anything which smacked of chronological development. R. Pettazzoni's "*Aperçu Introductif*" in the first volume of *Numen* [2]) illustrates this clearly. He explains the purpose of phenomenology as being to explain "le sens" of religion [3]) and quotes Van Der Leeuw's dicta: "Die Religionsphänomenologie is nicht Religionsgeschichte" and "von einer historischen Entwicklung der Religion weiß die Phänomenologie nichts". [4]) The distinction between the two disciplines could not be more emphatically stated, and it is significant that it is the notion of development which betrays itself as an important distinguishing factor.

Conversely, Pettazzoni himself attempted to draw the two together precisely by emphasising "la fenomenologia dinamica". In the phenomenology of the dynamics of religion he saw the point of identification between phenomenology and history. [5]) He was, it seems to me, partly right. On the one hand it is important to hold history and phenomen-

1) G. Van Der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (2nd. Eng. ed. 1964) p. 609. (The first edition was in 1933.)

2) *Numen* I, 1 (Jan. 1954), *Aperçu Introductif.*

3) *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

4) *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

5) *Numen* I. 2 *Manuali di Storia delle Religioni* p. 140. Cf. also Numen VI, 1 (Jan. 1959) *Il Metodo Comparativo* pp. 9ff. and p. 14.

ology firmly apart, as their relationship is one of interplay. A "dualism" of mental categories such as Pettazzoni feared does not necessarily affect the unity and coherence of that which is studied. However on the other hand Pettazzoni's instinctive demand for a phenomenology of the dynamics of religion was completely justified. Such a phenomenology is just as important as a phenomenology of the static structure of religion, though it may be more difficult to develop.

Perhaps the main difficulty in elaborating a theory of the "dynamic" aspects of religion is indeed that it can easily be mistaken for history. A phenomenological theory draws on histories of religions and relates again to further historical research as a heuristic principle, but it is itself an abstraction (or set of abstractions) and as such quite different from those wide generalised sweeps of history which are sometimes illuminating but which more often simply obscure the actual complexities of things. The integrity of the historical method as such, which must be defended from the idolatry, so to speak, of specific phenomenological theories, may be safeguarded if one assumes, at any rate for a few centuries or so, that no phenomenological theory can claim to be *exhaustively* illuminating, especially if the field of religion is defined, for operative purposes, at its widest. Nevertheless a theory is valuable if it illuminates some similarities between some religions which are dissimilar in other respects, or if it sets up a framework in terms of which varying degrees of some characteristics may be considered in the case of a series of religions. It is in this spirit that the following ideas about the transplantation of religion, in expressly formal and non-historical terms, are offered.

Van Der Leeuw himself devoted only nine pages [6]) out of several hundred to "the dynamics of religion", in the course of which he dealt with syncretism, transposition, mission, revival and reformation. Of the five terms mentioned "mission" stands out as carrying with it heavy associations of one specific religion, Christianity, and I therefore suggest that it should be dropped for phenomenological purposes in favour of *transplantation.* Similarly I prefer the word *ambiguity* (for which see later) to *accomodation* as the latter has specifically Buddhist overtones for those who are aware of them.

In the above cases the preferred terms also have the advantage over

---

6) Van Der Leeuw, *op. cit.,* pp. 609ff.

the rejected ones that they do not necessarily imply conscious activity. Van Der Leeuw admitted that "mission" may be completely unconscious [7]) but it must be said that it can scarcely be so in the specifically Christian context from which the word was drawn. *Transplantation* allows us to include conscious and unconscious activity without strain. I admit that even *transplantation,* if taken too literally, suggests some kind of gardener rearranging his flowers and vegetables, but *propagation,* which is unconscious enough in botany, has already been snapped up by the Vatican. So we shall have to make do with *transplantation,* forgetting the gardener and allowing that seeds are sometimes blown about by the wind or carried unwittingly by animals and birds. The use of the word *transplantation* will also allow us to detail a rather more comprehensive theoretical pattern which will link "mission" not only with "syncretism" as in Van Der Leeuw's chapter 93 but also with "revival" and "reform" as in his chapter 94.

The transplantation of a religion involves a complex relationship between tradition and interpretation, or in other words, an interplay between what is taken to be the content of the religion and the key factors in the situation which it is entering. This relationship may be considered in terms of three principal aspects (designated below as 1.1; 1.2; 1.3) and five sets of differentia (designated 2.1; 2.2; etc.). In order to explain the theory in consecutive prose it will be convenient to detail briefly two pairs of differentia as an introduction, then the three principal aspects as the hinge of the theory, then the three further sets of differentia by way of elucidation.

2.1. Transplantation may be geographical or chronological. It may be geographical as in the case of the spread of oriental cults in the Roman Empire, or the spread of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Manichaeism, etc. into the areas concerned (c.f. "syncretism" and "mission", Van Der Leeuw, *op. cit.,* pp. 609ff.). It may also be chronological, not in the trivial sense that geographical transplantation takes time, but in the sense that a religion may find itself running on the spot to reassert itself in changing cultural circumstances (cf. "revivals" and "reformations", Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.,* pp. 613ff. with which should also be considered "transpositions", *op. cit.,* p. 610f., and also restatements and "aggiornamento").

---

7) *Op. cit.,* p. 611.

2.2. The factors in the situation into which a religion is transplanted may be themselves specifically religious or not, or both. If a religion already present in the situation under consideration is itself undergoing a chronological transplantation, then religious struggle may ensue. Sometimes however political or economic or other non-religious factors may be more important than the claims of rival religions.

1.1. Contact (the first principal of transplantation). This is a very simple matter involving the setting up or presentation of means of communication, styles of activity, etc. e.g. writings, ideas, buildings, rituals. These means bear some relation to the factors of the situation into which the religion is being transplanted, i.e. writings are translated or re-translated etc.

1.2. Ambiguity (the seond principal aspect of transplantation). This involves a degree of acceptance of factors prevailing in the situation into which the religion is entering, such that the question of heresy and orthodoxy, rightness or wrongness, is thereby raised, i.e. the question as to the identity or otherwise of that which is expressed in the new situation and that which gave the initial impulse to the transplantation, or in other words the question as to the persistenec or dissipation of the tradition. Ambiguity may appear as one symbol with two sets of associations (e.g. Māra [8])) or simply in the unresolved coexistence of elements belonging to the transplanting tradition and to the situation which is being entered (e.g. Christian and pagan elements in Beowulf).

1.3. Recoupment [9]) (the third principal aspect of transplantation). This involves the reassertion or reclarification of that which was being transplanted in some adequate way. On the one hand the new expression of the religion will have a reasonable claim to identity with that which

---

8) See T. O. Ling, *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil,* 1962.

9) Since working out the above ideas I have come across the use of the word "recoupment" by I. R. Faruqi in his *History of Religions: its Nature and Significance for Christian Education and the Muslim-Christian Dialogue* (continuation, in *Numen* XII, 2. p. 83) where he says. "Therefore, there can be no doubt that Semitic Christianity had itself developed into Islam, and that the latter's contention with Orthodox Christianity is only a backward look within the same stream from a point further down its course — in short a domestic recoupment within the one and same Semitic consciousness itself." Clearly the usage is not yet technical in the sense in which I am trying to establish it, but at the same time it is a clear attempt to delineate a chronological transplantation (for more details of which see *op cit.,* pp. 81ff.) which coincides with Islam's account of itself, and to claim the Quranic revelation as an adequate reassertion of the essential meaning

gave the impulse to the transplantation; but on the other hand it will not be simply identical with older forms since it has expressed itself in terms of the factors of the situation which it has entered. The recoupment aspect is the most difficult to evaluate because it involves some sorting out of heresy and orthodoxy (or similar), that is, some attempt to elucidate the essential characteristics or content of the religion concerned, which is frequently a theological problem (or similar) for the adherents of the religion themselves.

2.3. The three aspects may appear chronologically in the order given and are perhaps thus most easy to recognise, as e.g. in the case of the hellenisation of Christianity. However they may also be relevant in some other order. For example, the work of Nichiren, considered as a case of chronological transplantation ("reform"), began with the extremely fluid and ambiguous state of Buddhism in Japan at the time, developed into a conscious attempt at recoupment by the seeking out and setting forth of what he took to be orthodox essence of Buddhism, and finally flowered into new symbols (new *gohonzon, daimoku,* and new *kaidan*) which in turn made contact with that and subsequent generations. Indeed the three aspects may be relevant in a quite unchronological way. For example, the *gohonzon* in Nichirenite Buddhism might be considered simultaneously under all three aspects.

2.4. The three aspects may be more or less tightly linked one with another. E.g. in the case of Christianity the prevailing instinct seems to be to insist on recoupment following closely on the ambiguities caused by contact, although this judgement depends partly on how one delineates Christianity as a historical phenomenon. Buddhism allows for a greater degree of ambiguity, as does Shinto (so that relationships between the two are very difficult to chart), while Manichaeism allowed so much ambiguity that it was never able to recoup properly and died out altogether.

2.5. The adherents of religions may be themselves conscious in varying degrees of the transplantation process. They may react quite unconsciously to situations which arise and thereby ensure the automatic chronological transplantation of their religion (c.f. Van Der Leeuw's

---

of the tradition. Faruqi insists that the historical truth involved must be discovered and established. But the extreme complexity of analysis should be recognised, especially in the case of the aspect of recoupment, complicated as it is by problems of religious self-interpretation on the part of the religions involved.

comments on "syncretism" and "transposition" *op cit.*, pp. 609ff). Conscious furtherance of a transplantation process may be variously motivated, e.g. politically, economically (Diana of the Ephesians!) or religiously (mission or apostolate, etc.) or by some subtle combination of these. The lowest degree of sophistication in the conscious furtherance of transplantation is reliance on contact; second in order of sophistication comes the recognition that in a resultant ambiguous situation orthodoxy is at risk and that recoupment is demanded; and thirdly comes the conscious acceptance of a tolerable amount of ambiguity as the price of successful transplantation.

The theory I have outlined, I should insist, is not an invitation to vast frescoes of the history of religion. In practice, under the umbrellas of the big names, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, many transplantation processes are taking place at once, just as the situations in which a religion is potentially influential are innumerable and various. When a particular case is under consideration the eight points which have been detailed might be thought of as questions to be raised. Some of the questions may not prove easy to answer, especially those concerning ambiguity and recoupment, and especially if those two aspects are almost simultaneous and very tightly linked. However, it is essential, in my view, to raise such questions in the study of religions, since transplantation is an everpresent aspect of that which is under study.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

CAMPANELLA, Tommaso, *De Dictis Christi ineditis theologicorum Liber XXIII, testo critico e traduzione a cura di Romano Americo* — Roma, Centro Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, 1969, 230 pp.

CAMPENHAUSEN, Hans von, *The Fathers of the Latin Church — (Men who shaped the Western Church)* — Stanford California, Stanford University Press, 1969, 328 pp.

CHAMBERLAYNE, John H., *The Quest of Faith, An Introduction to Contemporary Religion* — Oxford, The Religious Education Press Limited, 1969, 135 pp.

CHIRASSI, Ileana, *Elementi di culture precereali nei miti a riti greci* — Roma, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1968, 211 pp.

CHIRASSI, Ileana, *Poseidaon-Enesidaon nel Pantheon Miceneo (Atti e memorie del congresso internazionale di Micenologia, Roma 27 settembre-3 ottobre 1967)* — Roma, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1968.

CONRAD, D., *Studien zum Altargesetz Ex 20: 24-26,* Inaugural-Dissertation-Marburg, Buch- und Offsetdruckerei H. Kombächer, 1969, 162 pp.

DEMETRIO, Francisco, S. J., *Symbols in Comparative Religion and the Georgics, Logos 3,* Studies published by the Faculty of Loyola House of Studies-Ateneo de Manila University, 1968, 146 pp.

DUTHOY, Robert, *The Taurobolium, its Evolution and Terminology* (Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain, publiés par M. J. Vermaseren, Tome dixième) — Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1969, 129 pp.

EARHART, H. Byron, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity* (The Religious Life of Man) — Belmont, California, Dickenson Publishing Company Inc, 1969, 115 pp.

L'ANALYSE du language théologique, Le nom de Dieu, actes du colloque organisé par le centre international d'études humanistes de Rome, Rome 5-11 janvier 1969—aux soins de Enrico Castelli—Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1969, 528 pp.

LARSON, Gerald J., *Classical Sāṃkhya, an Interpretation of its History and Meaning* — Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, Banarsidass, 1969, 312 pp.

MONUMENTA NIPPONICA, *Studies in Japanese Culture,* Volume XXIII, Numbers 3-4, Volume XXIV, Numbers 1-2. — Tokyo, Sophia University.

OLDENBURG, Ulf, *The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion.* (Supplementa ad Numen, altera series, dissertationes ad historiam religionis pertinentes, volumen tertium). — Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1969, 216 pp.

RELIGION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, *Three Religions in concord and conflict,* general editor A. J. Arberry, Volume I Judaism and Christianity (595 pp.). Volume II Islam (750 pp.) — Cambridge, at the University Press, 1969.

REYMOND, E. A. E., *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple.* — New York, Manchester, University Press, Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969, 355 pp.

RUNES, Dagobert D., *Der Jude und das Kreuz* — Fürth-Erlangen, Ner-Tamid Verlag, 1969, 79 pp.

SALLES-DABADIE, J. M. A., *Recherches sur Simon Mage, I L'Apophasis megalè* (Cahiers de la revue biblique, 10) — Paris. J. Gadalba et Cie, éditeurs, 1969, 43 pp.

VISHAḌANANDA, Swami, *Conversations on Spirit Divine,* Part III — Ottapalam, George Press, 1968, 318 pp.

YOROI, K., *Gaṇeśagītā,* a Study, Translation with Notes and a Condensed Rendering of the Commentary of Nīlakaṇṭha — The Hague-Paris, Mouton, 1968, 201 pp.